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A HISTORY OF RUSSIA

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A HISTORY *of* RUSSIA

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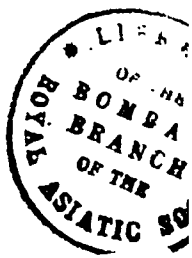

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HISTORY OF RUSSIA

CHAPTER I

The principal phenomena of the third period of Russian history—The position of Rus at the middle of the fifteenth century—Boundaries of the then Principality of Moscow—Change in the later process of Moscow's absorption of Rus—Territorial acquisitions of Ivan III. and his successor—The political unification of Great Rus as the fundamental factor of this period—Direct results of that factor—Change in the external position of the Principality of Moscow, and in the external policy of its rulers—The idea of a national Russian State—Its expression in the external policy of Ivan III.

Now let us turn to the study of the third period of Russian history—of the period which begins with the middle of the fifteenth century (to be precise, with the accession of Ivan III. in 1462), and ends with, approximately, the beginning of the seventeenth, when, in 1613, a new dynasty made its appearance on the Muscovite throne. To that period I have before referred[1] as the period of Muscovite Rus or of the Great Russian Empire. Northern Rus, hitherto broken up into a number of independent local communities, now became united under a single State power, the wielder of which was the Muscovite Tsar, assisted by a newly-compounded class of boyars. Although, as before, the basis of popular industry remained the agricultural labour of free *krestiané* working State or private lands, the former class of agrarian property kept passing more and more into the hands of a new military class which the State had created, and the freedom of peasant labour kept becoming more and more restricted in the direction of industrial dependence of the *krestianin* upon the military landowner. Such are the principal phenomena to be noted during this third period.

First of all, let me try to explain the fundamental, the central,

[1] See vol. i. p. 2.

factor from which all other phenomena of the time were derived, or towards which they all tended. By what are we entitled to place the commencement of the new period at the middle of the fifteenth century? By the fact that thence onwards the Russian land began to undergo important changes, due to the new Muscovite State, and to the new Muscovite Tsar who ruled that State. In these two factors we see the principal forces which, during the century and a half which formed the period now confronting us, operated to place the Russian land in a new position. When Ivan III. succeeded his father on the Muscovite throne, neither a Muscovite Empire existed where we see it established at the close of the sixteenth century, nor had a Muscovite Tsar arisen who held the political status of which we see him possessed a hundred years later. The reason why these two factors had not arisen in the year 1462 was that they were the result only of a long and laborious process elaborated during the period awaiting us. The better to understand their origin, let us picture to ourselves the political position of the Russian land as it was at about the middle of the fifteenth century.

Practically the whole of the northern portion of the Russian plain, from its north-easternmost corner to the Gulf of Finland, constituted, at that time, the province of free Novgorod the Great—a province to which belonged also the little sub-province of Pskov, situated in the extreme south-western corner of Novgorodian territory, near Livonia. As for Western or White Rus, a portion of Great Rus (to be precise, the province of Smolensk), and the whole of Little Rus, with those neighbouring regions which to-day constitute the Great Russian governments[1] of Koursk and Orlov and portions of the governments of Tula and Kaluga, they formed part of the Lithuanian-Polish Empire. South of Tula and Riazan there stretched a vast expanse of Steppe territory, which, extending to the shores of the Black Sea, the Sea of Azov, and the Caspian, had never been settled by any permanent Russian population, but was under the dominion of the Tartars of the Crimea and the Lower Volga. Eastwards, beyond the Middle and Upper Volga, lay the Tartar Khanate of Kazan (separated from the Golden Horde during the opening half of the fifteenth century), the Commonwealth of Viatka (only nominally subject to Moscow), and certain alien races of Perm. As for the immediate centre of the Russian plain, it con-

[1] *i.e.* provinces.

stituted an aggregate of large and small principalities, with, among them, that of Moscow. To define broadly the boundaries of the then Muscovite State, the northern portion of the present-day government of Moscow (the portion which to-day forms the canton of Klin) still formed part of the old Principality of Tver; while, further to the north and the north-east (*i.e.* northward of the Volga), the territories of Moscow either marched with, or alternated with, territories belonging to Novgorod, Rostov, and Yaroslavl, until the junction of the Sukhona with the Joug was reached. South-westwards, the Muscovite boundary started from Lithuania, and followed the Ugra through what now constitutes the government of Kaluga—although the town of Kaluga itself lay in the extreme south-western corner of the Muscovite Principality, 170 versts from the capital. Between Kaluga and Kolomna the Middle Oka divided the Muscovite Principality from the Principality of Riazan, while the lower portion of that river (*i.e.* the portion situated below its confluence with the Tsna), together with the section of the Volga which lies between Nizhni Novgorod and the mouths of the Sura and Vetluga, divided Muscovite territory from the territories of those Morduines and Tcheremissians who owed allegiance to the Tartars of Kazan. Yet this south-westernmost corner of Muscovite territory constituted at once Moscow's capital province and the advanced guard of the Principality: whence we see to what point in particular the military strength of the State was directed. At the middle of the fifteenth century Moscow lay at no great distance from the outskirts of three non-friendly principalities. Eighty versts to the northward of the city there began the Principality of Tver—the most *hostile* of Moscow's enemies, while a hundred versts to the southward the Muscovite outpost line confronted her most *restless* foe, the Tartar. Lastly, a hundred versts (or a little more) to the westward (Mozhaisk in Smolensk being the last Muscovite outpost in that direction) stood Lithuania, the most *pressingly dangerous* of Moscow's opponents. Thus, from north, south, and west a hostile force had but a few stages to cover to reach the Muscovite capital—a disadvantage in the external position of the city of which we must never lose sight as we study Muscovite history from the middle of the fifteenth century onwards.

Thus the Russian land was broken up into a multitude of large and small political units, all of them independent of one another. Of these the Principality of Moscow formed one, though not the most *con-*

siderable one, seeing that Lithuania exceeded it in population, and the territories of Novgorod in area. On the other hand, though the Russian territories were internally divided into a number of individual fractions, their external political position divided them precisely into two halves—a south-western and a north-eastern; of which the south-western half was subject to Poland-Lithuania, and the north-eastern to the Khan of the Golden Horde. Consequently we can best define the position of the country at the middle of the fifteenth century by pointing to its two leading features—namely, to its external political subjection and to its internal political disunion. Indeed, throughout the whole of the Russian plain there was not, in those days, a single community (Viatka alone excepted) which did not pay homage to one or other of the alien yokes named.

Such was the setting amid which Tsar Ivan III. continued the work of his predecessors, the old Suzerain Princes of Moscow. During the century and a half before his time we have observed two processes operating in the history of Northern Rus—namely, a process of territorial acquisition by the Principality of Moscow at the expense of other principalities, and a process of material aggrandisement of the Muscovite Suzerain Princes at the expense of the Muscovite *appanage* princes. Yet, great though the progress of Moscow had been, neither the one process nor the other had attained its completion when Ivan III. came to the throne. To begin with, Moscow's absorption of Rus had not yet reached the point of embracing all the independent local units which still existed in Northern and Central Rus. The units awaiting their turn to be absorbed might be divided, according to their systems of political organisation, into two classes—namely, principalities and free commonwealths. The former all belonged to two princely lines—namely, to the senior line of Tchernigov and to the line of Vsevolod III. of Suzdal; while they also comprised four groups of appanage principalities, headed, in each case, by a local Suzerain Prince, and forming the Suzerain Principalities of Riazan, Rostov, Yaroslavl, and Tver. Nevertheless, neither Ivan III. nor his son and successor, Vassilii, were *sole* rulers of their Principality, but shared the possession of it with their near kinsmen, the appanage princes of Moscow—rulers whom the authority of the Suzerain Prince had not yet succeeded in converting into princes subject to a Muscovite Tsar, since the Suzerain Prince of Moscow had risen superior to his appanage

kinsmen not so much through *acquisition* of, as through sheer *volume* of, strength—*i.e.* through the extent of his dominions and the amount of his income. Ivan III. had, as appanage princes under his suzerainty, four brothers of his and an uncle by marriage (Michael of Verea), while Vassilii III. had four brothers in the same position. As usual, the mutual relations of Suzerain and juniors were defined by treaties. In these documents we encounter all the old stereotyped definitions and antiquated *formulae* of a bygone age—definitions and *formulae* which in no way corresponded to the actualities of their day. Still are the contracting parties seen feigning ignorance of accomplished changes, and speaking to one another as though all was between them as of old. Yet it may be added that in one case we find Ivan III. threatening a son of Michael of Verea with imprisonment, and depriving the aged father of his appanage because that son fled for refuge to Lithuania.

As already stated, Ivan III. continued the work of Moscow's territorial absorption of Rus. Yet he did this on other than the old lines. During the appanage period, the territorial acquisitions of the Muscovite Princes had been the result either of seizure or of private negotiation with one or another neighbouring ruler, nor had the local communities of the territories acquired taken any active part in the work beyond making an occasional demonstration of sympathy with Moscow. With the middle of the fifteenth century, however, these communities began to take a *direct* share in the work—and that, too, in spite of the fact that in few of those communities do we find identical classes displaying sympathy with the ruler of Moscow. In Novgorod, for example, the pro-Muscovite party consisted of the populace, headed by a few boyars, and represented a faction which aimed chiefly at restriction of the local upper classes at the hands of the Prince of Moscow. On the other hand, the reason why the *upper* and *official* classes of Rus of the Princes[1] favoured Moscow was that they were tempted by the advantages of serving a powerful and wealthy ruler. Long before Moscow dealt the Principality of Tver its deathblow, Tveran boyars and covenanted officials had begun to transfer themselves to the service of the Muscovite Prince; while Ivan III. had not yet completed his preparations for his punitive expedition against the Tveran Government for its alliance with Lithuania when we find

[1] *i.e.* Rus exclusive of the free town commonwealths.

further bands of local boyars and their sons deserting their lawful liege, and passing over *en masse* to Moscow (two appanage princes of Tver among their number). Finally, when Ivan was at the gates of the city we see yet another body of local boyars and appanage princes seceding to the Muscovite camp, and taking an oath of allegiance to the Muscovite Prince. Such transference of fealty the Chronicle of Tver dubs *kramola* or treason, and considers it to have been the chief cause of the Principality's downfall; which testimony is confirmed by another writer of the period, who also attributes the disaster to treachery on the part of the local boyars. We see the same phenomena repeated in the Principality of Riazan. Although this State became added to Moscow only in the year 1517 (*i.e.* during the reign of Ivan's *successor*), the Muscovite ruler had long been receiving support from the principal local magnate, a boyar named Korobin, who was keenly desirous of compassing the downfall of his prince. Later, the union of princes which, in appanage days, the Suzerain Prince of Moscow had formed exclusively from among his near and distant relatives, became widened and strengthened by interests confirmatory of the authority of the newly-created Tsar of Moscow. Hitherto that union (dependent as it had always been upon the will of the Khan) had relied for its working upon material force and casual, temporary relations alone. That is to say, the majority of its constituent princes had become members (under the presidency of the Suzerain Prince) either because his material pressure, added to his influence with the Horde, had proved too strong for them, or because at times they were inspired by patriotic motives of the kind which on one occasion induced certain of their number to join Dmitri Donskoi against Tver and the Khan Mamai.[1] Now, however, the action of a new bond in the composition of the union caused the latter to become wider in its scope. The new bond referred to consisted of a *religious* interest, and its working is best seen in the case of those Russian Orthodox princes who had yielded fealty to Lithuania. It will be remembered that we ceased our study of Western Rus at the period when that region was undergoing invasion by the Tartars (1240).[2] After that period there arose in close proximity to it the Principality of Lithuania, which, during the next century and a half, acquired an ever-increasing ascendency over the desolate and disunited Russian principalities to which

[1] See vol. i. p. 288. [2] See vol. i. p. 245.

it was a neighbour. Though Western Rus does not seem to have offered very much opposition to Lithuania (perhaps for the reason that the latter had at least freed it from the Tartar yoke), it none the less began to exercise a marked *cultural* and *political* influence upon its new conqueror. The result was that, by the close of the fourteenth century, Lithuania had become a Russian rather than a Lithuanian State as regards the composition of its population and the order of its life. This was because, in 1386, Jagiello, the then Suzerain Prince of Lithuania (who had been brought up in the Orthodox tenets of his mother, the Princess Juliana of Tver), married the heiress to the Polish throne, the Princess Jadviga, and embraced Catholicism; which dynastic union of the Principalities of Lithuania and Poland caused a close politico-religious bond to become imposed upon the newly-created Polish-Lithuanian Empire, and so led the Government of the latter to assist also in the initiation of an active Catholic propaganda in Western Rus. The movement acquired additional strength when (during the latter half of the fifteenth century) Casimir IV. succeeded to the throne of his father, Jagiello. Yet the local Orthodox Russian community offered to the Catholic missionaries such strenuous opposition that Western Rus became filled with strife—became filled with what a letter of the period calls "a great contention"—between the new missionary propagandists and the adherents of the old faith. "All our Orthodox Christendom do they now seek to baptize anew," says the writer of the local letter referred to, "and therefore doth our Rus bear no love unto Lithuania." Drawn inevitably into this religious movement, the Orthodox princes of Western Rus—rulers who, under the easy overlordship of the Lithuanian Sovereign, had not yet wholly lost their independence in their own dominions—began one by one to make overtures to Moscow, as to their natural religious centre. Those of them whose proximity to the Muscovite frontier enabled them actually to unite themselves and their possessions to the Principality of Moscow were granted conditions of allegiance specially framed for the purpose. Although, by these conditions, the princes were henceforth bound to the service of the Muscovite Tsar, as his permanent, but inferior, allies, they were permitted to retain their own forms of government in their own domains. The first princes thus to become subject-allies of Moscow were those descendants of St. Michael of Tchernigov who ruled the petty Upper Okan principalities of Bieloi,

Novosiltz, Vorotin, Odoiev, and others; and their example was followed by two of Vsevolod's stock, the Prince of Tchernigov and the Prince of Novgorod Sieverski (respectively a son of Ivan Andreivitch of Mozhaisk and a grandson of Shemiaka).[1] Now, when the said Ivan Andreivitch and Shemiaka had been worsted in their struggles with Vassilii the Dark, they had, in each case, fled to Lithuania, where they had acquired extensive possessions on the Desna, the Seim, the Sosh, and the Dnieper, as well as the cities of Tchernigov and Novgorod Sieverski. That is to say, they had never been anything but the bitterest of foes to Vassilii. Yet no sooner was the call sounded for a stand to be made for Orthodoxy than, forgetting their hereditary enmity, the son of the one and the grandson of the other became subject-allies of Vassilii's son himself!—clear evidence that, in proportion as the Muscovite union of princes broadened, it became a union constituting a military hegemony of Moscow over all the other allied princes of Rus.

Such were the new phenomena prominent in Moscow's absorption of Rus from the middle of the fifteenth century onwards. First the local communities began openly to turn to Moscow, either of their own accord, or at the instance of their respective governments; which caused the Muscovite unification of the country to acquire a different character and a faster rate of progress. That is to say, it ceased to be a matter of seizure or of private negotiation, and became a *national, a religious* movement. The briefest possible enumeration of Moscow's territorial acquisitions during the times of Ivan III. and his son Vassilii will suffice to show us how greatly the political consolidation of Rus by Moscow then became accelerated. The middle of the fifteenth century was no sooner passed than principalities and free commonwealths vied with one another in transferring themselves and their provinces to Muscovite allegiance. In 1463 the Princes of Yaroslavl, both Suzerain and appanage, swore fealty to Ivan III., and, accepting Muscovite service, resigned their independence. Next, in the seventies of the same century, there took place the conquest of Novgorod the Great, as also of its extensive territories in Northern Rus. Next, in 1472 the Principality of Perm (where Russian colonisation had begun as early as the fourteenth century, in the time of St. Stephen of Perm) made final submission to the Muscovite ruler. Next, in 1474 the Princes of Rostov sold the remaining half of their territory to

[1] See vol. i. p. 310.

Moscow (the first half had become Muscovite property at an earlier date), and sealed the transaction by entering the ranks of the Muscovite boyars. Next, in 1485 Ivan III. laid siege to Tver, and took it without a blow being struck on either side. Next, in 1489 Viatka made final surrender, while in the subsequent nineties the Princes of Viazma, with four of the petty rulers belonging to the lines of Tchernigov (namely, the Princes of Odoiev, Novosiltz, Vorotin, and Mtzensk), recognised the authority of the Muscovite Tsar over themselves and their possessions (the latter consisting of a strip in the east of the province of Smolensk, and most of the provinces of Tchnernigov and Novgorod Sieverski). Next, under Ivan's successor there became added to Moscow—in 1510 Pskov and its province, in 1513 Smolensk (first seized from Rus by Lithuania early in the fifteenth century), and in 1517 Riazan. Finally, at some date or another between 1517 and 1523, the Principalities of Tchernigov and Novgorod Sieverski became added to the number of Moscow's absolute possessions, on the occasion when the ruler of Novgorod Sieverski (whom I have alluded to already as a grandson of Shemiaka) first conquered his neighbour and companion in exile, the Prince of Tchernigov, and then was himself cast into a Muscovite dungeon. Of the territories acquired by Ivan beyond the boundaries of the Great Rus of his day (*i.e.* the territories situated on the Middle and Lower Volga, and in the Steppe country of the Don and its tributaries) we need not speak, since what his father and grandfather acquired is sufficient of itself to show us how greatly at that period the area of the Principality of Moscow became increased. In fact, without counting the wild and non-fortified Russian settlements in the Trans-Ural regions (*i.e.* in Ugra and the country of the Voguls), Moscow now reigned from the Petchora and the Northern Urals to the mouths of the Neva and the Narova, and from Vassilsursk on the Volga to Lubiech on the Dnieper. In short, when Ivan III. ascended the throne, Muscovite territory comprised a little over 15,000 square miles; yet, by the time that that ruler and his son had completed their task of territorial acquisition, at least 25,000 square miles had become added to the area named.

Such was the change gradually effected in the position of the Principality of Moscow. Although this territorial expansion was, in itself, a purely external, a purely geographical, achievement, it exercised a most potent influence upon the political status of Moscow and the Muscovite

ruler. It was not the mere *number* of the territories acquired that was important: it was the general feeling created in Moscow that a great and age-long work was in progress which bore a profound relation to the internal structure of Russian life. That feeling we see expressed in an old Muscovite chronicle which hails Vassilii III. as the final consolidator of Rus, as also in a story that, when the Prince of Novgorod Sieverski (the last Muscovite prince of a line other than Vassilii's to fill the position of an appanage prince of Moscow) had been thrown into prison, there appeared in the streets of the capital a monk carrying a broom, who, when asked the purpose for which that implement was intended, replied: "The Empire is not yet wholly cleansed. The time hath come to sweep thence the last of the dust." Indeed, if we picture to ourselves the new frontiers of the Principality, as created by the territorial acquisitions described, it will be seen that they comprised within their boundaries an entire nationality—the whole of that Great Russian stock to which Russian colonisation of Northern and Central Rus had given rise during the appanage period. Up to the middle of the fifteenth century that nationality remained a mere ethnographical factor, an entity which, devoid of all political significance, constituted a mere aggregate of self-governing, variously-organised political communes wherein any expression of *national unity* by *unity of State* was impossible. Now, however, the Great Russian stock became combined under a single State power, and covered by a single political form: which communicated to the Principality of Moscow a new character. Hitherto that State had been one of *several* Suzerain Principalities in Northern Rus. Now it became the *only* Suzerain Principality in the region, as well as a *national* one, seeing that its boundaries exactly coincided with the distribution of the Great Russian stock. In time, also, the popular sympathies which had always tended to draw Great Rus towards Moscow became converted into *political ties*: and in this we see the fundamental factor to which all other phenomena of our history during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries owed their origin. That factor might be succinctly stated by saying that the completion of the absorption of North-Eastern Rus by Moscow converted the Principality of Moscow into a national Great Russian State, and invested the Muscovite ruler with the status of a national Tsar of Great Rus. Consequently, I repeat, if we survey the principal phenomena of

Russian history during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it will be seen that the external and the internal position of the Muscovite Empire during that period were exclusively due to results arising out of the fundamental factor named.

The first of those results was a change in the *external position* of the Principality. Hitherto Moscow had been protected from external foes by the territories of other Russian principalities and of the free town commonwealths—on the north by the Principality of Tver, on the east and north-east by the Principalities of Yaroslavl, Rostov, and (until the close of the fourteenth century) Nizhni Novgorod, on the south by Riazan and the various petty appanages of the Upper Oka, on the west by Smolensk (until its capture by Vitovt in 1404), and on the north-west by the territories of Novgorod and Pskov. With the middle of the fifteenth century, however, these buffer States disappeared, and the Principality of Moscow found itself face to face with alien lands which formed no part of the dominions of the Russian family of princes. With this change in the external position of the Muscovite State went a change in the external *policy* of the Muscovite rulers. Acting now on a larger stage, they undertook rôles which had never entered into the purview of the Muscovite Princes of the appanage period. Hitherto those rulers' external relations had been confined to the close ring of their own brethren, the other princes of Rus, and to the Tartars, but with Ivan III. Muscovite policy set foot upon a broader road, and the Empire of Moscow began to engage in complex diplomatic dealings with States of Western Europe—with Poland-Lithuania, Sweden, the Teutonic and Livonian Orders of Knights, the Emperor of Germany, and so forth.

With this extension of the diplomatic field went also a change in the *programme* of Muscovite external policy. It was a change which was closely connected with the idea now arising in the Muscovite community at large—namely, the idea of a *national State;* and it deserves the greater attention in that few ideas of any kind have played a direct part in forming the factors of our ancient history. A perception—rather, a consciousness—of the national unity of the Russian land was no factor born of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but, on the contrary, the work of Kievan Rus of the eleventh and twelfth. Indeed, in concluding our study of the political

structure of the land during the Kievan period, I pointed to that feeling, and even essayed to determine certain of its characteristics.[1] I stated that it expressed itself less in a recognition of the character and historical destiny of the nation than in an idea of the Russian land as the *common fatherland.* It is difficult to determine precisely what effect the disturbed conditions of the appanage period exercised upon it, but at least it is certain that, despite the support which it received from ecclesiastical and other ties, it began thenceforth to decline rapidly among the people. The cleavage of the Russian nationality into two halves, a south-western and a north-eastern; the disintegration of the latter into appanages; a foreign yoke,—none of these conditions could be precisely favourable to maintaining undimmed the idea of national unity. Yet that those conditions may at least have served to revive or to keep alive a *demand* for that idea is quite possible, seeing that the idea in question played so great a part in the subsequent progress of the Muscovite Principality. The theory of a national State, the sense of an imperative need for political unity on a national basis, first arose, and subsequently developed apace, among Muscovite administrative circles, in proportion as Great Rus became subject to a consolidated Muscovite authority. It will be interesting to trace the original form and gradual assimilation of a theory which was destined to exercise so great an influence upon the course of life in the Principality of Moscow. To begin with, there can be little doubt that its development was largely due to the change in the *external relations* of the Muscovite ruler: wherefore as its first sponsor we may name the Muscovite diplomacy of Ivan's period, and take it that from the palace of the Tsar and the chancellory of the Kremlin it spread to the community at large. Formerly collisions between the rulers of Moscow and their Russian neighbours had affected only the *local* interests and the *local* sentiments of the inhabitants of Moscow or Tver or Riazan: wherefore those collisions had tended, if anything, to *disunite* the community. Now, however, Moscow at variance with Tver or Riazan became Rus at variance with Poland or Sweden or the Germans; so that, whereas Moscow's struggles had formerly consisted of mutual feuds of the Russian princes, they now became struggles of the Russian nation with other nations—became struggles which, instead of dis-

[1] See vol. i. p. 124.

uniting the population, caused Moscow's relations with her alien neighbours to acquire an importance for *the Great Russian nation at large*, and so to combine the various local units of the population in a common recognition of common interests and dangers—in a general idea that Moscow was a citadel divinely appointed to watch over interests, and to guard against dangers, which touched the denizen of Tver or of Riazan or of Rus in general as much as they did the inhabitant of Moscow. Thus Moscow's external policy had the effect of inspiring a theory of a common nationality, of a national State. That theory, in its turn, was bound to leave its mark upon the *social consciousness* of the Muscovite Princes. Although those rulers acted, throughout, on behalf of their private family interest, the indifference or the merely tacit sympathy displayed by the appanages towards their local princes in proportion as those rulers became absorbed by Moscow gradually combined with the active support of the Hierarchy, and with Moscow's success in the struggle against the national enslavers,[1] to invest the egotistical policy of the Muscovite consolidators of the country with the character of a national work, a patriotic movement; while at the same time the coincidence of the territorial acquisitions of those consolidators with the distribution of the Great Russian stock gradually caused the Muscovite Princes insensibly to blend their private dynastic interest with the popular weal, and so to figure as fighting for faith and nationality. With the whole of Great Rus added to his *otchina*, and an obligation imposed upon him to act on behalf of the national interest, the Tsar of Moscow began to demand that *every* portion of the Russian land should enter into that *otchina:* with the result that we see a united Great Rus conceiving the idea both of forming a national State and of putting such bounds to that State as should make it independent alike of chance fluctuations in the success of the Muscovite arms and of chance colonistic movements on the part of the Great Russian people.

From the accession of Ivan III. onwards we see this idea growing more and more distinct in Muscovite diplomatic documents. Of that fact let me cite a few (though, perhaps, not the most striking) of the instances at our disposal. Ivan twice went to war with his neighbour of Lithuania, Prince Alexander,[2] and on each occasion the struggle

[1] *i.e.* Lithuania and the Tartars.

[2] Son of Casimir IV., who was succeeded by John Albrecht.

was due to the same cause—namely, to the secession of certain of the petty Princes of Tchernigov to Muscovite service. The first of these two wars began on the death of Casimir in 1492, and came to an end in 1494: yet Alexander's marriage with a daughter of Ivan's did not prevent a second contest from lasting from 1500 to 1503, after that another and a still larger band of princes had provided the requisite pretext by deserting the service of Lithuania for that of Moscow. The war had not long begun before Alexander was elected to fill the Polish throne, in the room of his deceased brother, John Albrecht; whereupon the Papal-Hungarian Ambassador in Moscow (a brother of Alexander's) seized the occasion to complain at the Muscovite court that the Tsar had robbed Lithuania of possessions to which he had no title. To this the Muscovite Government replied: "We do note that the Princes of Hungary and Lithuania have declared themselves mindful to strive with us for their possessions. Yet wherefore call they them their possessions? Are not they towns and provinces which diverse Russian princes have brought with them to our service, or which our people have taken from Lithuania? Surely the Pope knoweth that the Princes Vladislav and Alexander are heritors of the Principality of Poland and of the State of Lithuania but from their *fathers*, whereas *we* are heritors of the Russian land *from the beginning*. Let the Pope, therefore, consider whether those Princes be not in error in thus seeking to go to war with us for *our otchina*." Stripped of diplomatic phraseology, this means that the *whole* of the Russian land, and not merely *its Great Russian portion*, was henceforth declared the heritage of the Muscovite Tsar. The same declaration is repeated on the conclusion of peace in 1503. On that occasion Alexander reproached Ivan with failing to restore him dominions which Moscow had seized from Lithuania—the Lithuanian Prince declaring that he "doth desire but his own *otchina*." "And do I not also desire mine own *otchina?*" retorted Ivan, "— the Russian land which until now hath been held by Lithuania, yet which doth include both Kiev and Smolensk and others of our towns?" During the same peace negotiations we find the boyars of Moscow assuring the Polish-Lithuanian commissioners, in Ivan's name: "Our *otchina* hath not alway been those towns and provinces which now do appertain unto us. Yet hath the Russian land descended unto us, for our *otchina, from our forefathers of old*." Likewise, we find Ivan sending

a message to the Khan of the Crimea that, until the Prince of Moscow shall have regained "his *otchina*" ("to wit, all the Russian land which now doth appertain unto Lithuania"), there can be no more than an armistice "for the gathering of fresh strength and the drawing of fresh breath"—not a permanent peace of any sort between the two States. Thus the idea of State unity of the Russian land which owed its birth to historical tradition gradually developed into a political claim everywhere asserted by Moscow as her inalienable right.

Such were the two direct results of the fundamental factor of the period. Briefly they may be defined by saying that the territorial acquisitions of the Muscovite Prince brought about (1) a change in the external position of the Principality of Moscow, and (2) a change in the tasks which confronted Muscovite diplomacy. This raising of the question of the consolidation of the Russian land gave rise to nearly a century's strife between the two contiguous States of Rus and Poland-Lithuania. A mere enumeration of the wars which raged between them during the times of Ivan III. and his two successors will suffice to show us how grave an historical forecast lay in Ivan's message to the Khan of the Crimea, seeing that foreshadowed in that message were two Lithuanian wars in Ivan's time, two in that of his son Vassilii, and one during the regency of Vassilii's widow, Helena—not to speak of that struggle with Livonia which, for a space of twenty years, Ivan IV. waged simultaneously with his long-protracted contest (or, rather, two successive contests) with Poland. In fact, out of the ninety years 1492–1582, no fewer than forty were devoted to strife with Lithuania.

CHAPTER II

Internal results of the fundamental factor of the third period—Growth of political self-realisation in the Muscovite Empire—Sophia Palaeologus, and the importance of her rôle in Moscow—New titles and genealogy—Legend of the coronation of Vladimir Monomakh—The idea of the divine origin of the Imperial power—*Otchina*, as distinguished from State—Fluctuations between the two ideas of rule—Order of succession to the throne—Growth of the supreme power in the Muscovite State—The retrograde and baneful character of appanage rule—The indeterminate relation of Ivan III. and his immediate successors to that rule—Composition of the supreme power of the Muscovite Tsar—Change in the attitude towards him of the Muscovite community—Summary.

ALTHOUGH, in the last chapter, I pointed out the two most direct results of the principal, the fundamental, factor of the period under study, there were other and more occult phases of Muscovite State Life—such phases as political ideas and internal relations of State—upon which that factor exercised a no less potent influence.

To begin with, the fundamental factor in question greatly influenced the Muscovite Empire and the Great Russian community in the direction of political *self-realisation*. Of course, however thoroughly realised, the new position of the Muscovite Tsar could not very well inspire the minds of Muscovite governing circles with any corresponding series of new and finished political theories. Indeed, not a single memorial of the period accords full and direct expression to the ideas which might have been expected to have arisen from the change then in progress in the position of affairs. Politicians of the day could not easily abandon their abstract theories, nor yet pass, by any swift transition, from new factors to new tenets. With them a new political notion developed unawares, and long remained in the phase of indeterminate project or vague aspiration. To understand thinkers thus placed we must look to the more simple and primitive phenomena of human psychology, and note, in respect of such persons, such *external* details of their daily life as their deportment, dress, and chosen environment. Those are the signs which give the key to their thoughts and feel-

ings, however much those thoughts and feelings may remain unrealised by those who cherish them, or be, as yet, unfitted for more intelligent expression. Conscious of its new position, yet not wholly able to account for its recently-acquired status, the State power of Moscow first of all groped for a foothold among forms to correspond to that position, and then, having surrounded itself with such forms, attempted to define its new dignity. From this point of view, certain of the diplomatic formalities and court ceremonies which were instituted during Ivan's reign contain not a little that is interesting.

Ivan was twice married—the first time to Maria Borisovna, a sister of the neighbouring Suzerain Prince of Tver. On her death in 1467 the Muscovite ruler began to look further afield for a spouse, since he desired to have one of more exalted degree. At that time there was residing in Rome an orphaned niece of the late Byzantine Emperor—Sophia, the daughter of Thomas Palaeologus. Although, since the Council of Florence, the Greeks had stood low in the estimation of the Orthodox Russians, and Sophia had not only been living in close proximity to the hated Pope, but moving in ecclesiastical circles that were at least suspect, Ivan III. swallowed his religious scruples, and, causing Sophia to be fetched from Italy, married her in the year 1472. She was a Princess who was known throughout Europe for her wit, and brought with her to Moscow a keen intellect: consequently she soon acquired a considerable influence in the State. Indeed, it was to her that the boyars of the sixteenth century attributed most of the unpopular innovations which now began to make their appearance at the Muscovite court. Herberstein (who was twice sent to Moscow, as German Ambassador under Ivan's successor, and who was a keen observer of Muscovite life) duly noted these murmurings of the boyars, and remarked, in his memoirs, that Sophia was an extraordinarily clever woman who had so been able to influence her husband that most of what he did had been done at her suggestion. To her it was usual to attribute (among other things) Ivan's final resolution to rid his shoulders of the Tartar yoke. Nevertheless, amid the tales and opinions of the boyars concerning Sophia it is difficult always to distinguish mere suspicion or prejudice due to ill-will from actual observation. In any case it would have been impossible for her to have inspired projects both dear to her own heart and intelligible to, as well as looked upon with favour by, the

Muscovite community at large, seeing that she had brought with her the customs and traditions of the Byzantine court, as well as a certain pride of origin, and a feeling of vexation that she had married a mere tributary to the Khan. Likewise, she could scarcely have failed to disapprove of the plain setting and unceremonious relations of a court where even Ivan himself was sometimes forced to submit to what his grandson[1] subsequently called "many words of reviling and abuse" from his truculent boyars. Yet others besides Ivan and herself desired to see a change in the old system that was so at variance with the new position of the Muscovite ruler; and for the accomplishment of that change Sophia, with her imported Greeks of Roman and Byzantine views, could furnish many a valuable suggestion. Therefore, while we may ascribe to her considerable influence over the ceremonious environment of the Muscovite court, as well as over the palace intrigues and personal relations of the courtiers, it is probable that, in the domain of *political* affairs, her suggestions only reflected the inchoate or secret schemes of Ivan himself. At the same time, it is possible that the idea slowly spread among the community that, as Tsarina, she intended to use her Muscovite marriage to elevate the Tsar of Moscow to the position both of heir to the Byzantine throne and of inheritor of all those interests in the Orthodox East which hitherto had depended upon the Lord of Byzantium. If so, Sophia would be valued by Moscow much as she appears to have valued herself—namely, as a Byzantine princess rather than as a Muscovite. At the Traitski Monastery of St. Sergius still there is preserved a sheet which she worked with her own hands and embroidered with her own name; and although this sheet was made in the year 1498 (*i.e.* twenty-six years after her marriage with Ivan), and one might have supposed that in so long a space of time she would have entirely forgotten her girlhood and her early Byzantine status, we still see her signing herself, as of old, in the signature which her actual fingers have embroidered, "Tsarevna Tsaregorodskaia" or "*Imperial Princess of Byzantium*"—not "Velikaia Kniaginia Moskovskaia" or "Grand Princess of Moscow." One reason for this may be that, as Tsarina, she enjoyed the right of receiving ambassadors accredited to Moscow, and that for that reason she looked upon her union with Ivan as a political demonstration signifying to

[1] Ivan IV.

all the world that, as heiress to the declining house of Byzantium, the new Tsarina of Rus had transferred the supreme rights of the Byzantine house to Moscow, as to the new Tsargorod, and there shared them with the Muscovite lord whom she had espoused.

Conscious of being in a new position, as well as united to a consort who ranked as heiress to the Byzantine Emperors, Ivan soon found his old quarters in the Kremlin both mean and narrow, in spite of the fact that his forefathers had tenanted them before him. Accordingly, he sent for Italian artists to build him a new Usspenski Cathedral, a new palace of stone in place of the old wooden erection, and a so-called "Hall of Angles." Likewise he instituted all that complex and precise ceremonial which helped so much to communicate to the court of the Kremlin its tedium and affectation. Abroad, also, Ivan began to strike out more boldly: his greatest achievement, in this connection, being that, without a blow struck, and even with the connivance of the Tartars themselves, he succeeded in ridding his shoulders of that Mongol yoke which, for a space of two-and-a-half centuries (namely, from 1238 to 1480), had pressed with such weight upon Northern Rus. Muscovite State documents of the period, especially diplomatic documents, now begin to take on a new and more ceremonious diction, and to elaborate a rich terminology which had been unknown to the Muscovite State clerks of the appanage epoch. Nor was time lost in devising titles to match these new political ideas and tendencies, nor yet in inserting those titles into deeds executed by the Tsar of Moscow. In this we see an epitome of the whole political programme of the Tsar's new position—a position less actual than assumed. At the basis of that programme lay the theories already mentioned as first deduced by Muscovite administrative intellects from accomplished facts, and then elevated into political claims. Those theories were (1) that the Tsar of Moscow was the national ruler of the *whole* of the Russian land, and (2) that he was the political and ecclesiastical successor of the Byzantine Emperors. Although a large portion of Rus still belonged to Poland-Lithuania, Ivan's relations with Western courts (including even the court of Lithuania itself) soon reached the point of emboldening him to brandish before the eyes of the political world of Europe his new title of *Hosudar Vsia Russi* or "Emperor of All Rus"—a style hitherto employed only in domestic circles, or in documents relating only to

internal administration. The first occasion of this was when, in 1494, he compelled the Lithuanian Government to insert the title into the formal treaty concluded in that year. Yet, even as early as the fall of the Tartar yoke (*i.e.* in 1480), we find him styling himself (in his relations with such minor rulers as the Grand Master of the Livonian Knights) "*Tsar* of All Rus." The term "Tsar" is, I need hardly say, only a Southern-Slavonic and Russian abbreviated form of the Latin "Caesar," just as a different pronunciation of the same word has produced the German title of "Kaiser." Sometimes under Ivan III., and frequently under Ivan IV., we find the title of "Tsar" combined (though only in documents of internal administration) with the practically synonymous title of "*Samoderzetz*"—a Slavonic translation of the Byzantine style Αὐτοκράτωρ. Nevertheless in ancient Rus neither of these titles meant precisely what they do now, seeing that in those days they expressed rather the idea of a ruler independent of any extraneous or foreign power than that of an Emperor possessed of unlimited internal authority. In short, they were employed by the political diction of those days in a directly antithetical sense to what is now meant by the term "*vassal.*" True, Russian works anterior to the Tartar yoke sometimes dub even the Russian Princes of *their* day "Tsar," but they do so out of respect, and in no way as connoting a political term, seeing that, up to the middle of the fifteenth century, it was to the Byzantine Emperors and the Khans of the Golden Horde alone—the two classes of independent rulers best known to ancient Rus—that the latter accorded the title in question. Consequently even Ivan III. himself was not able to assume it until he had ceased to be a tributary to the Horde. However, to this assumption the overthrow of the Tartar yoke removed the last political obstacle, while, at the same time, Ivan's marriage with Sophia invested it with *historical* justification. Consequently from that period onwards he was in a position to regard himself as the sole remaining ruler in the world who was at once independent and Orthodox—the sole remaining ruler who approximated to the type of the Byzantine Emperors and was at the same time supreme over the Rus which hitherto had owned only the sway of the Tartar Khans. These new and splendid titles adopted, Ivan found it unbecoming to limit his signature to them alone, or to style himself, in administrative documents, by the simple Russian *formula* of "Ivan, Emperor and Grand Prince." Conse-

quently he proceeded to write himself down under the Church scriptory form of "Johannes, by the Mercy of God, Emperor of All Rus," and to append thereto, as its historical justification, a long string of geographical epithets descriptive of the new boundaries of the Muscovite Empire. His full signature, therefore, came to read: "Johannes, by the Mercy of God, Emperor of All Rus, and Grand Prince of Vladimir and Moscow and Novgorod and Pskov and Tver and Perm and Ugra and Bolgari and the rest." Finally, feeling that his political power, as well as his status in Orthodox Christendom and his kinship, through marriage, with Byzantium, now rendered him the successor of the declining house of the Eastern monarchs, the new Emperor of Moscow proceeded to devise himself a suitable expression of his *connection* with those potentates: with the result that from the close of the fifteenth century onwards we see the Byzantine crest of the double-headed eagle imprinted upon all seals affixed by the Tsar of Moscow to his documents of State.

In those days men thought less in theories than in forms, symbols, rites, and legends. That is to say, their ideas developed less in logical combinations than found expression in symbolical acts or hypothetical facts which called for justification of history. Men turned to the past, not for an explanation of present *phenomena*, but for pretexts for present *interests*, and precedents for current *claims*. Politicians of the early sixteenth century set no great store upon their Sovereign's kinship with Byzantium through *marriage:* what they desired to see was Imperial kinship with Byzantium through *blood*. Indeed, what they yearned for, above all things, was to be able to claim Imperial kinship with the primal source and exemplar of universal and world-wide power—namely, with Imperial Rome herself. Therefore it is not long before we find Muscovite literature of the period adducing a new genealogy of the Russian Princes, in which those Princes are derived from nothing less dignified than a Roman Emperor in person. It seems that early in the sixteenth century (or thereabouts) a story became concocted that, when Augustus Caesar, Ruler of the Universe, found his bodily powers declining, he divided the world among his various brethren and kinsmen; in particular, that he appointed his brother "Prus" ruler of the region of the river Vistula which we now call Prussia: the story concluding with a declaration that "from Prus the fourteenth generation was the great lord Rurik." Of

this legend Muscovite diplomacy hastened to avail itself: with the result that when, in the peace negotiations of 1563 with Poland, Ivan IV. first arrogated to himself the title of Tsar, his boyars lost no time in furnishing additional justification for that assumption by committing the above "genealogy" of Rurik's Muscovite posterity to writing—their immediate pretext for so doing being that light might be shed upon the theory and history of the Byzantine succession. Now, Vladimir Monomakh, of Kievan days, had for mother a daughter of the Byzantine Emperor, Constantine Monomakh, *whose death occurred fifty years before his grandson ascended the Kievan throne:* yet we find the boyars recording it in their document that, as soon as Vladimir Monomakh succeeded to Kiev, he conceived the idea of dispatching some of his *voievodi* against Tsargorod, with the object of overthrowing its Emperor. Upon this, to arrest the departure of the expedition from Rus, Constantine dispatched to Kiev the Greek Metropolitan Archbishop, with a crucifix made of the wood of the True Cross and his own (the Emperor's) cap—the cap, with its golden brim and its crown of carnelions, of which Augustus of Rome made so light: Constantine's idea being that the Archbishop should beg the Suzerain Prince, in the Emperor's name, to accord his master "peace and love," and permit of Orthodox Christendom dwelling together in tranquillity, and "*under the common power of our Empire and of thy Grand Autocracy of Great Rus.*" The cap referred to was subsequently used by Vladimir at his coronation, and from that time forth he began to call himself Monomakh, or the divinely crowned Tsar of Great Rus. "Since that day"—so ends the boyars' manuscript—"the self-same cap of the Tsar hath crowned all the Suzerain Princes of Vladimir."[1] This legend, as embodied by the boyars in writing, was used again at the solemn coronation of Ivan IV., when the titles of Tsar and Autocrat—first of all assumed by Ivan III., but by way of trial only, and in diplomatic documents alone—were finally and formally adopted for introduction into foreign relations and domestic administration. The fundamental purpose of the story was to show that the status of the Muscovite Tsars, as the ecclesiastico-political successors of the Emperors of Byzantium, was based upon a joint rulership of the whole Orthodox world which the Greek and Russian Sovereigns were alleged

[1] To this day the Tsars of Russia are crowned with such a cap.

to have established between themselves in the time of Vladimir Monomakh. That also is why Ivan IV. considered it imperative to have his newly-assumed title of Tsar confirmed by the written benediction of the Hierarchy in Council, headed by the Patriarch of Constantinople; his view being that thenceforth the rescript wherein that benediction was embodied would rank as the authoritative sanction of the Church Universal. It is interesting to note that the rescript in question included in its text the above legend of the coronation of Vladimir Monomakh. Likewise there exists a fourteenth-century Byzantine item to the effect that at one time the Suzerain Prince of Rus bore the rank of "Table Dresser" (τὸ τοῦ ἐπὶ τραπέζης ὀφφίκιον) to the Greek Emperor—the Emperor whom the Byzantine Church claimed as "Lord and Governor of the Inhabited World" (ὁ τῆς οἰκουμένης κύριος καὶ ἄρχων). Yet in a letter to one of those potentates Vassilii the Dark calls himself "*coŭsin*" to his Sacred and Imperial Majesty." Thus we see the former "Table Dresser" to the Lord of the World rising successively to be the colleague, the relative, and the successor of the Universal Sovereign. In time these various ideas whereon, during three generations, the political thought of Moscow exercised its prentice hand penetrated to the more educated portions of the Russian community: with the result that a monk of one of the old monasteries of Pskov is found almost at a loss to express his delight as he writes to Vassilii III. that the Christian States are now centred in the person of Vassilii alone, and that henceforth, in all the world, he is the one Orthodox Emperor, and Moscow the third and final Rome!

Not all of these details are equally important, yet all of them are equally interesting, both as illustrative of the trend of the political thought of their day and as expressive of the active working of the political sense which became initiated among Muscovite governing circles by the conditions of Moscow's new position. In the new titles and ceremonies with which the State power decked and encompassed itself, and more particularly in the genealogical and archæological legends wherewith it strove to illuminate its past, we see an expression of the progress of political self-realisation. In Moscow men felt that they were "growing up," and that therefore they must seek an historical and theological standard by which to measure that growth. All this resulted in attempts being made to penetrate to the *essence* of the

supreme power—to delve to its origin, bases, and functions. Conscious of being in a new position, the Tsar of Moscow found his old source of power, the system of *otchina i diedina* (*i.e.* succession through fathers and grandfathers), inadequate, since he now aspired to base his authority upon a higher foundation, and to free it from all vestiges of territorial-juridical origin. True, the idea of divine origin of supreme power had not been a total stranger even to Ivan's forefathers; yet none of them had ventured to give it such direct expression as we see displayed in the following instance. In 1486 a German knight named Poppel happened to be travelling in the less known and more remote regions of Europe, and so chanced upon Moscow. The aspect of this hitherto undiscovered Muscovite State struck him as a political and geographical revelation, since hitherto by "Rus" the Catholic West had meant Poland-Lithuania, and many people had never so much as suspected the existence of a Rus of *Moscow*. Consequently, no sooner had he returned home than he informed his Emperor, Friedrich III., that on the further side of the Rus of Poland-Lithuania lay *another* Rus, of Moscow —a State independent alike of Poland and of the Tartars, and the ruler of which would some day be stronger and richer even than the Polish King himself. Struck by this astounding news, Friedrich sent Poppel back to Moscow, with the object of begging the hand of one of Ivan's daughters for his (the German Emperor's) nephew —at the same time proposing to the Muscovite ruler a grant of the title of king. Ivan expressed his thanks for this civil proposition, but also commanded answer to be made to the Ambassador as follows: "Touching what thou hast said unto us concerning the kingship, we, by the grace of God, have been Emperors of our land from the beginning, and from our earliest forefathers, and do hold our commission of God Himself, even as they. Therefore we pray God that He may grant unto us and unto our children to be Emperors of our land for ever, even as we are now, and that we may never have need to be commissioned unto the same, even as we have not now." Similarly, when Ivan IV. was engaged in peace negotiations with the Polish-Lithuanian emissaries, and had complained that Sigismund Augustus declined to recognise his titles, and the rights which they expressed, he concluded his protest with an assertion that he had received those titles of God, and that he needed no confirmation of them from another.

Thus we see Moscow painfully attaining political self-realisation, and the consolidation of Great Rus leading not only to the idea of a Rus united under a single authority, but also to a desire to invest that authority with a universal (as against a merely pan-Russian) significance. What, then, was the pretext for the accomplishment of the one and the conception of the other? Ivan III. consistently maintained, and his successors repeated his declarations, that the whole of the Russian land was his *otchina or ancestral patrimony:* which would seem to prove that, after all, the union of Great Rus was effected under an *old* political form, seeing that we have no reason to suppose that Ivan looked upon an *otchina*, as such, in any different light to what his forefathers had done. Yet all social unions have a nature peculiar to themselves, as well as a nature that demands political forms to correspond. In the *otchina* of appanage days (the appanage was a union in which the relations of the free portion of the population to their prince were based upon contracts at any moment liable to cancellation) the prince was the owner of territory (*i.e.* of a certain territorial area and its industrial resources) rather than of the population whose fatherland that area, under his one and undivided authority, might at any time become. Similarly, though Moscow laid claim to the whole of the Russian land and nation in the name of the *Imperial* principle, Ivan's real idea was to rule it *quâ otchina—i.e.* on the basis of *private appanage right.* In this lay the innate contradiction in the work of consolidation which Ivan III. and his successors accomplished with such success. Though the first Muscovite ruler openly to proclaim the whole of the Russian land his *otchina*, Ivan seems to have realised the contradiction referred to, and to have striven to obviate it by reconciling his authority of *otchina* with the requirements of his new position. Become overlord of the whole Orthodox portion of the nation, he also recognised (though dimly) the obligations imposed upon him by his status as divinely commissioned overseer of the *public weal.* A glimpse of this idea is to be seen also in an incident whereof we derive our knowledge from a very indirect source —namely, from the pages of Tatistchev. In 1491, says the latter, Ivan used his treaty rights to command his appanage brethren to send military forces to the aid of his ally, the Khan Mengli Ghirei of the Crimea. One of those princes, however—Andrew of Uglitch—disobeyed the order, and sent no troops. Nothing was said about it at

the time, but when Andrew next visited the capital, he was first of all accorded a kind reception, and then seized, and thrown into prison. The Metropolitan attempted (as in duty bound) to intercede with the Suzerain Prince on his behalf, but Ivan refused to release the culprit—saying that this was not the first time that he had intrigued against his Suzerain. "Yet that would have been as nought," added Ivan, "save that when I die he would have sought the Suzerain throne to the despite of my grandson, and, if he had not attained it, he would have vexed my sons, and set them at strife the one with the other, and the Tartars would have burned and destroyed the Russian land, and would have made prisoners therein, and would have taken tribute from it again. Thus Christian blood would have been shed as of old time, and my labours would have been in vain, and ye would have become slaves, as of yore, unto the Tartars." Whence he gleaned this speech of the Prince's Tatistchev does not say, but at all events it would appear that, no sooner had the ultimate success of Moscow's consolidation of the land become assured, than the *otchinnik* and the *hosudar* in Ivan, the absolute proprietor and the autocratic sovereign, began to strive with one another for the mastery—a process which continued in his son, and in his grandson as well. Such fluctuation between two principles or forms of government was wont to become particularly prominent whenever questions of more than ordinary importance, due to the consolidation of the land (such questions as the succession to, or the proper form and scope of, the supreme power), called for decision; with the result that, for more than a century, the confusion into which this alternation of principles plunged the whole political life of now united Great Rus constituted a fault which shook the State to its foundations, and ended by bringing the dynasty of Great Russian consolidators to the ground.

We have seen that, previous to the reign of Ivan III., an actual, and not a juridical, process established the succession in the direct descending line of the princely house of Moscow. In those days everything was dependent upon circumstances and the will of the Khan; and inasmuch as both those two factors were favourable to the system named, they helped also to establish a custom by which, from Donskoi's time onwards, the Suzerainty became the heritage of the Muscovite house in general, and of the eldest son of the reigning

Suzerain in particular. Vassilii the Dark, who did and endured so much for the establishment of the custom, attempted to secure its permanency by appointing his eldest son, Ivan, co-ruler with himself. Ivan, in his turn, imitated his father by nominating as his partner in the Suzerainty his eldest son by his first wife (Ivan Ivanovitch), but the latter died, leaving a son behind him, at the very time when Sophia herself had a son approaching maturity. Consequently Ivan III. found himself the head of two descending and equivalent lines, in which the representative of the senior line (the grandson) stood a generation lower than did the representative of the junior line (the son). The boyars had little love for Sophia, and were all for the grandson; with the result that, when a palace intrigue on the part of Sophia and Vassilii happened to be discovered, the enraged Ivan seized the opportunity to nominate his grandson both his partner and his successor. Yet, since the custom of proclaiming a son both co-ruler and heir was of comparatively recent standing, Ivan did not rest satisfied with a mere declaration of his will, but decided to sanctify it with a solemn coronation of the nominee whom he had thus selected for the Suzerainty. To that end Byzantine coronation procedure was drawn upon for suitable rites, and those rites further amplified with details specially adapted to the occasion in view. The "Order of Institution to the Suzerain Princeship" which was the result of all these preparations for Dmitri's coronation has come down to us in a manuscript of the period. The ceremony was celebrated in the Usspenski Cathedral of Moscow in the year 1498, and at the moment when Ivan invested his grandson with the *shapka*, or cap of gold and carnelions, and the *barmi*, or broad collar of pearls, the Metropolitan turned towards the new co-Suzerain, and saluted him as "Mighty Tsar and Autocrat." Upon that Ivan seems, despite himself, to have been awed into looking backward into history and the past, that he might summon them to his aid in justification of the new order of succession which he had thus established in the direct descending line. At all events he thus made answer to the prelate: "O holy father and Metropolitan, the will of God hath caused our ancient customs to descend unto us from our ancestors, the Suzerain Princes. Alway those Suzerain Princes, our forefathers, did grant unto their eldest son the Princeship, and therefore would I also have consecrated my eldest son Ivan unto that office, had not God willed that he should die. Now, however, since there doth remain

unto me this my eldest son Dmitri, I do by these presents consecrate him, both during my lifetime and after me, unto the Suzerain Princeship of Vladimir and of Moscow and of Novgorod. Do thou also, my father, consecrate him unto the same." These words, taken in their primary meaning, would appear to show (1) that, when nominating his successor, Ivan desired to adhere to the direct descending line in the strictest sense of the term, and (2) that the solemn coronation service in sanctification of the said order of succession was only the customary form of the day for the promulgation of a new fundamental law. Such laws, and, above all, a law to regulate the succession to the throne, were supremely necessary at a time when the enormously swollen *otchina* of the descendants of Daniel [1] was in process of being converted into an Empire of Moscow, seeing that such a State as the latter differed from an *otchina* in that even its ruler himself had to give way before fundamental ordinances. Nevertheless, it was not long before Ivan broke his own solemn enactment, and accorded Sophia the victory, by deposing and imprisoning his lately crowned grandson, and raising his son to the Suzerainty as *Samoderzetz* or Autocrat. "Am I not free touching mine own sons and my grandson?" he asked once. "To whom I will, to him will I give the Princeship." In this *dictum* we hear the voice of the independent *otchinnik* rather than that of the ruler of an Empire who gave the State its first *Sudebnik* or Code of Laws. The same idea of discretionary selection of a successor from among the various heirs in the direct descending line is expressed in a mutual treaty concluded by Ivan's two eldest sons, Vassilii and Yuri, during the lifetime, and with the consent, of their father—a document wherein we see the father nominating as Suzerain the son whom he "*willed*," without regard to seniority. Thus Ivan's successors were given an example to follow to which they adhered with steadfast consistency—namely, the example of making with the one hand and breaking with the other, until they had shattered the very State which they themselves had created.

The same fluctuation between two systems of government marks the process of determining the proper form and scope of the supreme power. The active working of contemporary political thought (certain practical remnants of which still remain) led to more than one group of new embellishments being added to the Muscovite ruler and his

[1] See vol. i. p. 274.

title. Later, again, when the new status of the supreme power had become somewhat clearer, that status found expression in State law. Now, we have seen that, from the middle of the fourteenth century onwards, the Suzerain Princes of Moscow began by their wills to augment the inherited supremacy of the eldest son over his juniors of the appanages: and this process of augmentation was carried to still greater lengths by Ivan III., who, though bequeathing to his eldest son and successor over sixty provinces, towns, townships, and *prigorodi*, devised to his other four sons combined only some thirty towns—and those mostly of insignificant standing. Henceforth, therefore, the Suzerain Prince of Moscow greatly exceeded, in wealth and power, all his juniors of the appanages put together, and the same practical method of securing the political supremacy of the eldest son was employed also by Ivan's successors. An innovation of such importance can only have been due to one source—namely, to the steady permeation of Ivan's mind with Imperial ideas. Of this we have confirmatory evidence in the fact that, while consolidating the material predominance of the heir, he used his last will and testament to invest him also with certain *practical political privileges* over his juniors of the appanages. Indeed, Ivan's will constitutes, in this regard, the first instrument of its kind to be found in the history of Russian State law, since it constituted a first attempt at an absolute definition of the composition of the supreme power. Consequently I will next proceed to enumerate the various political privileges which, through this document, the Suzerain Prince acquired over his juniors.

(1) Hitherto all the princely co-inheritors had shared the possession and governorship of the city of Moscow *jointly*, as well as had enjoyed equal rights of collecting *dan*, taxes, and imposts, direct and indirect, from the same. By Ivan's will, however, the more important items in the financial administration of the capital (items such as commercial tolls, taxes upon sites and leases, and so forth) were consigned to the Suzerain Prince alone, who, however, was to allot a certain portion of the proceeds (100 roubles a year, or about 10,000 roubles in modern currency) to each of his juniors of the appanages. (2) Hitherto each of the appanage princes had administered the law, civil and criminal, in his own particular portion of the city and its attached suburban districts. By Ivan's will, however, jurisdiction in all the more important criminal cases, both in the city and its attached districts,

was assigned to the Suzerain Prince alone. (3) Hitherto each of the princes, both Suzerain and appanage, had coined, or had been at liberty to coin, his own currency, and our numismatical collections contain numerous examples of appanage money of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. By Ivan's will, however, this right of mintage was transferred exclusively to the Suzerain Prince. (4) Hitherto the appanage system of rule had permitted the appanage princes to bequeath their *otchini* to whomsoever they wished. Dmitri Donskoi put a first limitation upon this right by inserting into his will a provision that the prince of an appanage who died without leaving any sons behind him should be debarred from bequeathing his appanage to any one at all, but that the said appanage should be divided by the widow-mother, at her discretion, among the surviving brothers of the deceased. Ivan's will went a step further than this by applying the limitation exclusively to the benefit of the Suzerain Prince, to whom any "extinct" appanage was to pass *undivided*, save for such portion as would, in the ordinary course, be set aside as a life pension for the widow-mother—that portion, however, to revert, on her death, to the Suzerain Prince.

From this it is clear that Ivan III.'s will defined the authority of his eldest son, the Suzerain Prince, from one aspect only—namely, from the aspect of that authority's relation to the appanage princes. Formerly the superior of his junior kinsmen only in the extent of his possessions and the sum of his material resources, the Suzerain Prince now began to concentrate in his own person practically the whole stock of political rights. Consequently Ivan's successor ascended the throne very much more *Hosudar* (Emperor) than Ivan himself had ever been. During the first half of Ivan's reign his juniors of the appanages still remained capable of giving their Suzerain a good deal of trouble whenever occasion arose, but from that time onwards we see them mere rightless, helpless princes before him. Growing more and more impoverished, and of less and less account, they governed their territories, as it were, by rapine, and in the face of constant financial difficulties. Never wholly out of debt to the Tartars, they had to borrow money whence and how they could; until, the end of their tether reached, they usually made a composition by assigning both their debts and their appanages to the Suzerain Prince. Such was the economic position of the appanage princes, as adumbrated in their wills. Under Vassilii the plight of those rulers became even worse. Sometimes they would make

up their minds to abscond to Lithuania, but the scheme would come to light, and then we see them humbly suing their Suzerain for pardon either through the Metropolitan, or through the monks, or through the (Muscovite boyars), and calling themselves his "slaves," and him their *Hosudar*. Never at any time did they dare to engage in intrigue with the citizens of Moscow, whether in Ivan's time or in Vassilii's, since each of them knew that at the very first report, the very first suspicion, of disobedience or treason he would find himself in a Muscovite gaol. Nevertheless appanage right was at least *formally* recognised by those Suzerain Princes, since they continued to conclude treaties with their juniors on the old stereotyped lines, and as though treating with independent rulers: binding the appanage princes in question not to "apportion aught of their territory wheresoever nor whithersoever," nor to conclude treaties with any other ruler than their Suzerain, nor to enter into any negotiations without his knowledge, nor to seek the Suzerain throne after that his son, their nephew, had succeeded to his father's seat. Thus personal engagements, as of old, took the place of law. Yet, though harmless in themselves by reason of their moral and political weakness and inability to manage their appanages ("They have not the wherewithal to rule a State" was Vassilii's scornful remark on one occasion), the appanage princes never ceased to exercise a bad effect upon the course of affairs in, and the proper adjustment of, the Muscovite community of their day. Appanage traditions were still too recent to be easily forgotten, or to be kept from turning the heads of the weaker appanage princes whenever occasion offered. A prince of this kind was always a potential traitor by *position*, if not by *dis*position, since every intrigue attached itself to his skirts, even though the prime movers in it might be only the riff-raff of his court. Daily the Kremlin looked to him for trouble—its chief fear being lest he should abscond to Lithuania (though such an eventuality might at least have rid the State of useless relics of a troubled past, even as a similar eventuality served to deliver Vassilii the Dark from his two most implacable foes, the Prince of Mozhaisk and the grandson of Shemiaka).[1] Also, the system of according formal or court recognition to appanage princes was so at variance with their actual relations to the Government that it introduced an element of falsity into State life, and hindered the Muscovite Tsars from assimilating

[1] See p. 8.

and preserving one of the fundamental principles of a State order—namely, unity and integrity of the supreme power. The painful experience of his father and himself at length compelled Ivan III. to address himself seriously to the consideration of that power, and we find an envoy whom he sent to Vilna[1] saying to his (Ivan's) daughter, the Princess of Lithuania, in her father's name: "I have heard what trouble there hath been in the Lithuanian country, by reason of its many rulers. Thou thyself knowest how that in our land there was trouble of a like sort under my father. Likewise thou wilt have heard of the dealings which I have had with my brethren. For this reason I trust that what thou hast heard thou wilt bear in mind." Yet, though able to envisage the *autocratic* principle, the Muscovite Tsars had but a dim comprehension of the monarchical theory. Presently we shall see that, in spite of the fact that Ivan IV. made solemn and final adoption of the titles of Tsar and Autocrat, and that he was subsequently led by his controversy with Prince Kurbski to pass in exhaustive review an aspect of autocracy which had been unknown to Rus of a previous day, he still remained unable to rid his mind entirely of appanage customs. In his will (which was executed in 1572) we see him appointing his eldest son, Ivan, his successor, yet awarding him, not the *whole*, but a *portion*, of the Russian Empire, and leaving his second son, Feodor, an appanage composed of towns in different quarters of the State (Suzdal, Kostroma, Volokolamsk, Kozelsk, Mtzensk, and others). Nevertheless that appanage never became a *separate*, an *independent*, principality, nor did its prince ever acquire the status of an autonomous ruler of the type of the appanage princes of earlier days. Throughout he remained subject to his Tsar, and his appanage never wholly threw off the supreme authority of the elder brother as *Hosudar*, nor ceased to form an integral portion of the Russian Empire, one and indivisible. "To my son Feodor I do apportion the Appanage," says Ivan's will, "and to my eldest son, Ivan, the Grand Empire." Thus in the testator's mind there evidently lurked at least a *notion* of the principle of preserving both the supreme power and the territory of the State intact. The same document accords open expression—for the first time in the history of our State law—to the idea of an appanage prince as the *vassal* of his *Hosudar*. In the most insistent terms the father inculcates in the younger son un-

[1] The capital of Lithuania.

conditional and unresisting obedience to his elder brother: commanding him "to live in all things according unto his word, and to be his in all things, even unto wounding and death." Even though wronged by the elder brother, the younger is never to raise military forces against him, nor to defend himself, but only *bwit emu tchelom*,[1] and beseech his pardon for any offence which he (the younger brother) has committed. In a word, the appanage prince is to be the *viceroy*, and no more, of his *Hosudar*. Yet this was due to the appanage prince's actual title rather than to any degree to which his father's testamentary disposition rendered him subordinate to his Sovereign, seeing that such a disposition could have no operative importance. On the death of Ivan's eldest son, the second son stepped into his brother's shoes, while to the infant Tsarevitch (born shortly before his father's death) there was assigned the little appanage of Uglitch. Yet scarcely had the father closed his eyes in death when there arose around the cradle of the helpless child an agitation which, smouldering for a while, blazed up into such a conflagration as nearly destroyed the fruits of all the patient toil which the descendants of Daniel had undergone for a space of three hundred years. Indeed, up to the very close of the dynasty the Kremlin never wholly succeeded in ridding itself of the idea that every member of the reigning house ought to possess an appanage, no matter how small its area, or how illusory its rights of rule, provided that it *was* an appanage. Even so daring a thinker and reformer as Ivan IV. remained true to the family logic and policy of Moscow—to the logic of half-ideas and the policy of half-measures.

To summarise what has been said, that we may the better realise how the supreme power became compounded in the Muscovite Empire towards the close of the third period of Russian history—a favourable combination of conditions enabled one of the many small appanages in the region enclosed by the rivers Oka and Volga to expand itself into the area covered by the whole of the Great Russian stock. This successful movement encouraged the rulers of that appanage to expand also their view of themselves and their authority, and to augment the latter *pari passu* with the improvement in their material circumstances. Various resources were drawn upon for this work of Muscovite political thought—such resources as Christian tenets in general and Byzantine

[1] "To beat the ground with the forehead before him"—the Tartar form of homage which that race imposed upon the Russians.

views in particular, native historical traditions, and lessons derived from accomplished events and forecasts of the future. From this heterogeneous assortment of material a sufficiently complex, yet an inadequately defined, model of the supreme power was moulded, in which three distinctive features became prominent—namely, divine origin, universal headship of the Orthodox Church on the basis of an ecclesiastico-historical bond with the declining house of Byzantium, and a national, a pan-Russian, status based upon direct succession from Vladimir Monomakh. Yet these features were *imported* into the composition of the supreme power, not developed from its historically compounded groundwork. That groundwork was the Muscovite ruler's right of *otchina* over the Russian land—both over such of it as already belonged to him and over such of it as might belong to him in the future. In that right, again, we can distinguish three principal features, as defining its scope—namely, (1) absolute hereditary sovereignty (*i.e.* sovereignty independent of any external power, as expressed in the borrowed titles of Tsar and Autocrat), (2) testamentary succession in the direct descending line, with discretionary selection of a successor from among the descending heirs of the testator, and (3) indivisibility of the Empire (whether regarded as power or as territory), with retention of appanage rule under the supreme sovereignty of a Tsar. Though based upon *otchina* principles, these three governing features of the Imperial right gradually became elaborated (through suitable legislation and a process of elimination of all *otchina* alloy) into the bases of a State system: which bases and system were due to the fact that the *otchina* of the old-time Muscovite Princes had now become expanded into proportions in which it could no longer remain an *otchina*, but must perforce become a State.

Hitherto we have confined ourselves to such results of the fundamental factor of the period as disclosed themselves, on the one hand, in the external position and policy of the Muscovite State and, on the other hand, in the political sense of the Muscovite Tsar and the attributes of his supreme power. Yet it was a factor which disclosed itself also in the relations of the Muscovite community to its ruler. Down to the very close of the fifteenth century the relations of ruler to ruled retained their old appanage simplicity, nor as yet had a trace appeared of that veneration, that cult, with which the Tsar of Moscow afterward

became surrounded. In 1480, when the Khan Admed carried out his great invasion, Ivan III. began by taking up a position on the river Oka, but subsequently abandoned his forces, and returned to Moscow. The capital was panic-stricken when it saw its lord returning—so much so that the citizens (whom he found conveying their goods to the Kremlin, in expectation of a Tartar siege) are said by a contemporary manuscript to have addressed him thus: "When, O Tsar, thou art ruling us in times of peace thou dost burden us for nought with many dues: yet, now that thou thyself hast moved the Khan to wrath, through neglecting to pay unto him his tribute, thou art betraying us unto the Tartars!" Vassian, the aged Archbishop of Rostov, gave vent to even more stinging reproaches. Beginning by "speaking evil unto him" and calling him a "renegade," he went on to threaten to lay upon his soul any Christian blood which might be shed by the Mongols. An interesting episode is recorded also in the reign of Ivan's successor, Vassilii—a period when the old appanage relations of ruler to ruled were still not wholly extinct. It happened that the Tsar's brother, Prince Yuri of Dmitrov, fell under suspicion of treason; wherefore it was decided to wait until he should again visit the capital, and then to have him arrested. On learning of this, Yuri repaired to the Abbot Joseph of Volokolamsk, and complained bitterly to him of the slanders which he had heard to be current about himself in Moscow. Finally he besought the Abbot to proceed to the capital, and to plead his cause with the Tsar. Joseph counselled absolute submission. "Bow thou thy head before the Lord's Anointed," he said, "and humble thyself before him." Still Yuri hesitated. "Be thou unto me as a father," he urged. "I am ready to bear all things from my lord, seeing that thou hast counselled me not to withstand him,—yea, I am ready even to bear death itself: yet do thou go unto him in my stead." Joseph compromised by dispatching two of his senior friars to the Tsar, who no sooner perceived them entering his presence than, casting all rules of courtesy to the winds (rules which imposed upon him the obligation of welcoming the emissaries, and of making due inquiries after the Abbot's health), he burst out furiously: "Wherefore have ye come hither? What have I to do with ye?" One of the brethren reproved him, saying that it was unseemly for a *Hosudar* to forget himself so far as not only to fly into a rage before he had even learnt what their business was, but also to omit to make proper inquiries after the Abbot.

This took the Tsar aback. Rising to his feet, he forced to his lips a smile, and said: "Nay, pardon me, old men. I did but jest"; after which, doffing his cap, and bowing low to the messengers, he proceeded to observe the prescribed civilities concerning the Abbot. Upon that there followed an exposition of the matter in hand, and the Tsar so far respected Joseph's intervention as to make his peace with Yuri. Now, this incident must have occurred previous to the year 1515, since that was the date of Joseph's death: wherefore we see that, even at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the old simple appanage relations of ruled to ruler peeped forth at times. Nevertheless those relations came to an end with the last of the appanages, since under Ivan III., and still more so under Vassilii, the supreme power began to invest itself with that halo which so sharply differentiated the Muscovite Tsar from the rest of the community. Herberstein, who saw Moscow in Vassilii's time, remarks that the latter had so fully completed what his father had begun as to be more absolutely supreme over his subjects than was any other monarch in the world. To this the Ambassador adds that Moscow customarily said of its ruler: "The will of the Tsar is the will of God, and of the will of God is the Tsar the fulfiller"; likewise, that whenever a Muscovite was questioned concerning a matter of which he knew little or nothing, he would answer in the stereotyped *formula:* "I know not. Only God and the Tsar know." Finally (says Herberstein), the Muscovites had even gone so far as to elevate their ruler to the rank of "God's Steward and Gentleman-of-the-bedchamber" (*Bozhi Kliuchnik i Postelnik*)!—the result of their applying to divine relations the formal phraseology of the Muscovite court. Thus, even before Ivan the Terrible's time, there had become founded in Moscow that code of political ideas which so long ruled the life of Muscovite Rus.

In reviewing the various phenomena touched upon in this chapter, it cannot be said that the century and a half which followed upon the death of Vassilii the Dark had no effect upon the power and the political sense of the Tsar of Moscow. The three ideas (1) of a State unification of the *whole* of the Russian land, (2) of a Tsar of national status, and (3) of a divine commission to that Tsar to safeguard the public weal, must all of them (together with the early attempts to establish a proper composition of the supreme power, one and indivisible) be accounted notable achievements on the part of the

Muscovite thinkers of that day. Yet the importance of those achievements would have been confined to the *history* of ideas had not there gone with them that corresponding progress in the social and State orders of the land to which we are about to turn our attention in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

The Muscovite boyars—Change in their composition from the middle of the fifteenth century onwards—Conditions and rules governing the genealogical graduation of boyar families—The political attitude of the boyar class as newly compounded—Definition of the term "Muscovite boyars"—The *miestnichestvo* system—*Otechestvo* or hereditary standing—*Miestnichestvo* reckoning, simple and complex—Legislative limitations of the system—Its fundamental idea—The period of its elaboration—Its importance to the boyars as a political guarantee—Its shortcomings in that respect.

In studying the political results of the fundamental factor of the period —namely, the conversion of the Principality of Moscow into a Great Russian Empire—I described the manner in which that factor worked upon the political sense of the Muscovite Tsar and the Great Russian community until it had inspired the one with a new view of his authority and the other with a new view of its ruler. That is to say, finding himself risen to be national Sovereign of Rus, the Tsar of Moscow rose also in his own estimation and in that of his people. While thus producing new political ideas in men's minds, the same factor produced new *political relations* in the State. Above all things, it brought about a change in the composition and the political attitude of the dominant *stratum* of Muscovite society—namely, the boyar class. In its turn, that change gave rise to a corresponding alteration in the relations of the boyars to their Tsar—though an alteration which operated in an altogether different direction to that assumed by the change which we have seen take place in the relations of the rest of the community to the Sovereign.

To understand this phenomenon properly, we must recall the position of the Muscovite boyars during the appanage period. Even in those days Moscow had begun to attract such a numerous and brilliant company of boyars to its confines as no other princely court in Northern Rus could show. From the end of the thirteenth century onwards the banks of the Moskva gradually became a rallying point for eminent nobles drawn not only from the neighbouring principalities of the North and the more distant regions of Tchernigov, Kiev, and

Volhynia, but also from foreign parts—from the German West and the Tartar South-east. Thanks to this steady influx, the middle of the fifteenth century saw the Suzerain Prince of Moscow become hedged about with a powerful retinue of distinguished boyar families; no fewer than forty families of this kind being shown by their ancient genealogical records to have been then resident in the Principality. Among the most notable of them may be cited the Koshkins, the Morozovs, the Buturlins, the Tcheliadnins, the Veliaminovs, the Vorontzovs, the Khovrins, the Golovins, and the Saburovs. In all their relations with the Suzerain Prince the boyars of this period retained the same character of free, uncovenanted councillors and covenanted retainers as had distinguished the boyars under the princes of the twelfth century. With the middle of the fifteenth century, however, a profound change took place in their composition. Boyar genealogical scrolls of the sixteenth century illustrate this very clearly.* According to them, there were, at the end of the period named, upwards of two hundred noble families holding posts in the Muscovite service. If, therefore, we deduct from that the number of boyar families which were founded in Moscow previous to the times of Ivan III., we shall obtain a total of about a hundred and fifty boyar families who joined the ranks of Muscovite boyardom after the middle of the fifteenth century. In their origin these boyars were so heterogeneous that their genealogical scrolls almost remind one of the catalogue of a pan-Russian ethnographical museum. Indeed, so full and so varied was the multi-racial composition of this order—so charged was it with Russian, German, Greek, Lithuanian, Tartar, and Finnish elements—that it may be said to have represented both the whole of the Russian plain and every country which lay contiguous thereto. Still more important is the fact that most of the Muscovite boyars, as newly compounded, belonged to titled princely families. This was owing to the circumstance that the active absorption of Rus by Moscow which began with the accession of Ivan III. brought into Muscovite service a host of petty princes who had lost their obsolete Suzerain or appanage thrones: with the result that from that time onwards we see princes, princes, and again princes, in every branch of the service—whether as members of the State Council, as ministers of government departments, as provincial governors, or as *voievodi* of military forces. This new *stratum* of prince-officials entirely overlaid, and almost crushed out, the older *stratum* of Muscovite non-

titled boyars, and was, in the main, made up of Russian descendants of Rurik and of Lithuanian descendants of Guedemin.

Of course it was impossible for such a varied and fortuitous aggregate of social and ethnographical elements speedily to coalesce into a compact, uniform body. On the contrary, the new order of boyars became an extended hierarchical ladder whereon each boyar family had its place determined, not by mutual agreement, but by the official standing of that family in the service. That standing, again, was subject to three conditions. At the period of which I am speaking the notion prevailed in Moscow that, inasmuch as a prince was a prince, he ought always to occupy a higher official position than was held by a plain boyar, even though the former had entered the service of the Muscovite Tsar but yesterday, and the latter was come of a line of ancestors grown old in the service of their lord. Thus length of family service was made to yield to nobility of origin. This was the first condition. Secondly, princes in Muscovite service did not constitute a single grade, and no more, since descendants of Suzerain princes always ranked above descendants of princes of appanages. Thus the Princes Pienkov were always more highly placed in the service than were their kinsmen, the Princes Kurbski and Prozorovski, for the reason that the Pienkovs came of the Suzerain Princes of Yaroslavl, and the Princes Kurbski and Prozorovski only of *appanage* princes of that province. Consequently the position of a titled official in the Muscovite service was determined by his status at the moment of his becoming a servitor. In time the long-continued application of this condition gave rise to an exception from the first. That is to say, it caused some of the princes to take rank below plain boyars. The reason of that was this. Many former princes of appanages had lost their dominions previous to their passing into the service of Moscow, and had thereafter served at some other princely court, whether a Suzerain or an appanage. Therefore, as erstwhile servitors of princes junior to the Suzerain Prince of Moscow (who, in virtue of his tenure of the senior province of Vladimir, was considered to take precedence of all other Russian princes), they had to yield precedence to such of the old-established Muscovite boyars as had served the Suzerain from the beginning. This gave rise to a third condition—namely, that the position both of princes who had ceased to be rulers before their passage into Muscovite service and of plain boyars who had

migrated to Moscow from other principalities was determined by the comparative status of the princely courts at which both the one and the other had served before joining the ranks of Muscovite officialdom. These three conditions formed the basis of the rules which governed the genealogical graduation of plain and titled boyars in Moscow. To recapitulate them once more—the position of erstwhile reigning princes in the Muscovite service was determined by the status of the thrones upon which they had sat, while the position of erstwhile servitor princes and of plain boyars depended upon the status of the courts at which they had served. Consequently (1) a descendant of a Suzerain Prince always stood higher in the Muscovite service than did the descendant of an appanage prince, (2) the erstwhile reigning descendant of an appanage prince always stood higher than did a plain boyar, and (3) an old-established boyar in the service of the Suzerain Prince of Moscow always stood higher than did either an erstwhile servitor prince or a boyar formerly attached to an appanage prince. Thanks to this system of graduation, the new composition of the Muscovite order of boyars became cleft into several *strata*. Of these the top *stratum* was composed of former Suzerain Princes of Rus and Lithuania. Among them we find the Princes Pienkov of Yaroslavl and Shuiski of Suzdal, as well as the Suzerain Princes of Rostov and those Lithuanian princes from whom are descended the present-day families of Golitzin and Kurakin. Of the original non-titled boyars of Moscow, only the Zacharins (a branch of the ancient Muscovite family of the Koshkins) retained a place in this *stratum*. The second *stratum* of boyars consisted of descendants of leading appanage princes, with, as a subsequent addition to their number, certain of the more eminent of the original Muscovite boyar families (such as the Buturlins, the Tcheliadnins, and so on). As for the *strata* inferior to these two, they were made up of original Muscovite boyars of the secondary grade, of descendants of petty appanage princes, and of boyars from Tver, Rostov, and other outside principalities. Before long we shall see that the relations which became established[1] between the members of the leading grade in the Muscovite service made it a far easier matter to determine the comparative official status of individual personages and families belonging to that grade than it was to draw any fine dividing lines between the ranks of the service as a whole.

[1] Through the *miestnichestvo* system.

Thus newly compounded, the Muscovite order of boyars adopted a new political attitude. As already stated, the upper grade of the order derived its origin from former Suzerain and appanage princes. Yet that does not connote that with the disappearance of the old Suzerain and appanage principalities there went any immediate and wholesale disappearance of the appanage system hitherto existent in Northern Rus. On the contrary, that system long remained operative under the autocratic supremacy of the Muscovite Tsar, since, in its early days, the political unification of Northern Rus found expression only in unity of the Muscovite supreme power, not in any swift radical reconstruction of the local administrations. The authority of the Muscovite Tsar did not so much *replace* as *dominate* that of the appanage princes. Similarly, the new State system did not so much *abolish* the old one as *overlay* it, and create therein a new superior grade of institutions and official relations. Even the higher departments of such local administrations as those of Tver, Rostov, Nizhni Novgorod, and the rest, were not *extinguished*, but merely *transferred to Moscow*, where they continued to operate on individual bases, and without becoming in any way fused with the departments of the central Muscovite Government. In the same way, it not infrequently happened that, when appanage princes ceased to be independent rulers of their own domains, they none the less continued to reside in them as ordinary hereditary landowners—sometimes on a very large scale. Not infrequently, also, they retained in their hands such portions of their former authority as were comprised in the dispensation of civil and criminal justice (based upon the old local customs and legislation of their appanage), the maintenance of their own military forces, and so on. Indeed, cases occurred in which such princes retained also their old official title of *udelnïe kniazia* or "appanage princes," instead of assuming the newer and more usual title of *sluzhebnïe kniazia* or "servitor princes." Right up to the formation of the *Oprichnina* or "Select Corps" of Ivan IV. we meet with large landowners of the superior grade of the Muscovite service who exercised judicial and administrative rights over their hereditary estates from which there was no appeal, not even to the Tsar. Consequently the removal of a prince from an appanage—even from a Suzerain—throne did not invariably mean a complete revolution in his fortunes, nor yet an absolute loss of all

that he had formerly possessed. True, when actually in attendance at the court of the Kremlin, he usually found himself in a setting to which his forefathers had been strangers; yet at home—*i.e.* among his own courtiers, and surrounded by his ancestral *ménage*—such a prince still felt himself the nodal point of the old, familiar relations, and still retained his old appanage customs and ideas. Titled boyars of this class occupied all the higher administrative posts in Moscow, commanded the Muscovite forces in the field, and acted as governors of the various provinces of the Empire. An instance is even recorded of an erstwhile reigning appanage prince continuing to administer his principality as the Tsar's *namiestnik* or viceroy. All this led to the new titled Muscovite boyars, the descendants of former Suzerain and appanage princes, adopting a very different view of their status to that which the old non-titled Muscovite boyars had cherished with regard to themselves. Whereas the latter had been free, transitory servitors of the Suzerain Prince of Moscow on terms of *contract*, the former now began to look upon themselves as plenipotentiary administrators of the State *by right of origin*. Once become administrators of public affairs throughout the whole of united Northern Rus, they felt encouraged to look upon themselves, though concentrated in Moscow, as *masters* of the Russian land in much the same way that their forefathers, the old Suzerain and appanage princes, had been; except that, whereas the latter had been scattered about among the appanages, and had ruled the Russian land separately and by portions, their descendants were massed together in the Muscovite capital, and were beginning to rule the country jointly and as a whole. Thus the titled boyars of the sixteenth century gradually became confirmed in their view that their administrative status was not a compensation awarded them by the Muscovite Tsar, but an hereditary right—a right descended to them from their ancestors, independently of the Tsar, and as merely re-established by the natural course of events. To this theory the Tsars themselves contributed, by allowing some of their boyars to retain their old appanage systems and traditions; while even Vassilii III. (who, of all men, had no love for the boyar aristocracy) accorded that order certain recognition by dubbing the members of his Council (in a speech delivered to them just before his death) "boyars from times past of my house." Ever afterwards, when assembled in council in the Kremlin of Moscow, the new titled boyars looked

upon themselves as a body of recognised, hereditary administrators of the Russian land, and upon Moscow as the central point whence it was theirs to administer that land as of yore—though jointly now, and as a whole, rather than in isolation, and by portions. Thus the tradition of rule bequeathed to the boyars from appanage times does not appear to have undergone so much a *break* as a *transformation*. That is to say, now that all the descendants of former ruling princes were concentrated in Moscow, the authority which they inherited from their fathers became converted from individualistic, personal, and localised authority into authority collective, corporate, and pan-territorial. In a word, we see the new Muscovite order of boyars not only adopting a view of its political status which had been unknown to the boyars of the appanage period, but also reorganising itself on a political basis in accordance with that view.

Study of the composition of the community in the Muscovite Empire of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries brings us face to face with another result of the fundamental factor of the period—namely, with the result that the formation of a national Great Russian State was accompanied by the formation of a distinctive boyar theory with regard to the principle of aristocratic government. Of that theory the fundamental position might be expressed by saying that, to assist him in the task of governing the Russian land now united under his undivided sway, the Muscovite Tsar was bound to summon to his aid such distinguished coadjutors as derived from ancestors who had formerly ruled that land only by portions. That is to say, the investiture of the Suzerain Prince of Moscow with the status of a pan-territorial, national emperor led to the unification of Great Rus inspiring the local administrators concentrated in Moscow under the direction of that emperor with the idea that they were a pan-territorial administrative class. Nor did this view of the boyars with regard to their own status remain a political claim only. On the contrary, it grew and developed into that complete system of service relations which is known to our history as the *miestnichestvo*. Yet before entering upon the study of that system, let me explain what I mean by the term "Muscovite boyars." It is not precisely in the sense which it bore in Muscovite official diction of the sixteenth century that I use the term, seeing that at that period it connoted not so much a *social class* as a *superior grade of government officials*. To call a man a boyar meant,

in those days, not that he had been *born* one, but that he had been *promoted to be* one. No, I use the expression rather in a conditional sense, as denoting the upper *stratum* of that multitudinous military-official class which arose in the Muscovite Empire during the period which we are studying. To determine its true composition let us turn to the official genealogical register wherein are set down, in order of generations, all the more important families in the service. I refer to the *Hosudarev Rodoslovetz*, or "Genealogy of the Empire"—a record compiled during the times of Ivan IV., and used thereafter as a reference for settling any genealogical disputes which might arise between one member of the Muscovite service and another. It is pre-eminently to families accorded a place in this *Rodoslovetz*—to families known as *rodoslovnia familii*—that I refer when I employ the term "Muscovite boyars." Two conditions of membership of the ring were indispensable. In the first place, a family could not enter the genealogical circle unless, previous to (about) the beginning of the sixteenth century (the period when the circle began to be formed), it had numbered among its generations persons in the service of Moscow either as boyars, as retainers, or as members of one or other of the higher grades; while, in the second place, such a family could not retain its place in the circle unless all its members continued to hold posts in the *capital itself*—no matter whether those posts formed part of the central, of the provincial, or of the military departments of the administration.

Next let me expound the chief principles of the *miestnichestvo*. The term, in its specialised meaning, signifies the system of relations with regard to the service which gradually became established among the *rodoslovnia familii* of Moscow during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. To understand so complex and intricate a phenomenon we must first of all dismiss from our minds all modern ideas on the subject of State service—or, rather, we must compare ancient conditions of appointment to administrative posts with modern. At the present day fitness alone determines the relative position of officials appointed to a given department; which fitness, in its turn, is determined by such means as a scholastic degree, a course of preparation for the service, length and merits of previous service, and, in general, *personal* qualities. At all events, all other considerations are looked upon as extraneous or negligible. In each case the service relation

between the persons so appointed is fixed at the time of appointment, and fixed on the basis of a comparative valuation of such of their personal qualities as may be of use to the State: such valuation, of course, being performed by the State itself. In sixteenth-century Moscow, on the other hand, appointments to higher posts of State were based upon no considerations of the *personal* qualities of the persons to be appointed, but only upon the relative official standing of the families to which those persons happened to belong and the genealogical position which each individual happened to hold in the scale of his own particular family. Thus, the Princes of Odoiev always filled higher posts in the State than did members of the Buturlin family, for the reason that such was the mutual hierarchical relation existing between the two families. Nevertheless senior members of the Buturlin family could attain to positions closely approximating to, or even equal to, those of the junior Princes of Odoiev, and in that case their official correlation followed suit. In short, every boyar family, and every individual member of such a family, occupied a definite, permanent position with regard to other boyar families, and to each individual member of such families: and to that position all appointments to posts were made to correspond. Consequently it was a position which in no way depended upon appointments. Instead of the hierarchical relation between two colleagues in the service being fixed at the time of their appointment to their respective posts, and at the discretion of the authority appointing them, it was predetermined, independently of that authority, by the family position of the persons appointed. This family standing of a person with regard to members both of other families and of his own was called his *otechestvo*, and connoted the status which, acquired by his forefathers, became the hereditary dignity of all their descendants.

I repeat, then, that, in the *miestnichestvo* system, *otechestvo* was the inherited service relation of a given individual, or a given family, of the official class to all other individuals or families of that class. To determine this relation with precision, a method was devised which worked with mathematical exactness, seeing that it had rules which constituted a system to themselves, and might be termed *miestnichestvo* arithmetic. Likewise, the double function of the *otechestvo* (namely, of defining the relation of an official both to his own kinsfolk and to those of others) caused the *miestnichestvo* system of reckoning itself to

become a double one—namely, simple (*i.e.* according to the *Rodoslovetz* or "Genealogical Register" alone) and complex (*i.e.* according both to the *Rodoslovetz* and to what were known as *razriadi*). *Razriadi* were lists of appointments to higher posts at court, as well as to all such posts as headships of departments, governorships (civil and military) of towns, and commands of troops in the field. Compiled in the *Razriadni Prikaz* (whlch corresponded to our Ministry of War, or, rather, to our Headquarters of the General Staff), they were collated into folios: one such collation, in particular, being stated by M. Milinkov to have been carried out in 1556, when there was composed an *hosudarev razriad*, or State digest, of all the *razriadi* for the previous eighty years (1475–1556). Reckoning with the help of the *Rodoslovetz* served to determine the genealogical relation of a person to his own relatives, and was clearly borrowed from the relation existing between members of the primitive Russian *dom* or household —a unit composed either of a father and his married sons, with their families, or of a number of married brothers.[1] The members of this, the complex, type of household always adhered to the strictest observances of seniority: as is best seen by the order in which the family sat around the domestic board. Suppose a family of married brothers and their sons. The chief place belonged to the eldest brother, or *bolshak* —the master of the house—and next to him sat his two younger brothers, and then his eldest son. If the eldest brother or *bolshak* had a *third* brother younger than himself, then that third brother could not sit either above or below the eldest nephew (the eldest son of the *bolshak* referred to), for the reason that he was precisely equal in seniority to that nephew. Probably this equality owed its origin to the customary order of births in a family. That is to say, usually the fourth brother was born about at the same time as the *bolshak's* eldest son, and so would become numbered with the *second* generation, or generation of *the children*—thus leaving only the three eldest brothers to constitute the *first* generation, or generation of *the fathers*. This allotment of places explains what I have termed *miestnichestvo* arithmetic. According to that arithmetic, the eldest son of a father took, as it were, the *fourth* place at table, since above him there had to be left vacant two places for the second and third brothers of that father. Likewise, each successive brother sat a place lower than the one senior to him, so that

[1] See vol. i. chap. iv.

brothers sat in a row, and precisely in order of seniority. These two fundamental rules gave rise to a third—namely, that the fourth brother (*i.e.* the third uncle) was exactly equal in seniority to the eldest nephew. Consequently they could not sit together, but must seat themselves either apart or opposite to one another. The common basis of these rules was the fact that the *otechestvo* of each individual member of a family was determined by his comparative distance from the common founder. That distance was measured in special *miestnichestvo* units known as *miesta* or "places": whence the term *miestnichestvo*. Moreover, the connection between genealogy and service which distinguished the system caused the *miesto* or unit of measurement to bear a dual significance—namely, a significance of genealogy and a significance of service. In its genealogical significance it was the place in the family scale of seniority which each member of the family occupied in proportion to his distance from the common founder: and that distance, in its turn, was measured by the number of births anterior to each member, in the direct ascending line. On the other hand, in its significance of service the idea of the *miesto* or "place" must have been taken from the order in which boyars stood around the princely throne, where they grouped themselves according to service-genealogical seniority. Later, the idea of that grouping at court was extended to cover relations of service and all administrative posts. To the hierarchical relation existing between two given posts the genealogical distance between persons belonging either to the same family or to different families who were appointed to those posts (provided the posts were in the same government department) was made to correspond: to which end each separate sphere of official relations, each separate administrative department, and each separate post as a Councillor of State, as a governor of a town, or as a commander of military forces, was ranged in a like order of seniority, and grouped in a like hierarchical scale. For instance, posts as *voievodi* (generals of military forces) followed one another in this order. Every Muscovite army, whether great or small, marched in five *polki* or *otriadi* (regiments or detachments). These bodies were termed respectively the great regiment, the right wing, the advanced guard, the rear guard, and the left wing, and each unit had over it one or more *voievodi*, according to its size and the number of *sotni* or *roti* (companies of infantry or troops of cavalry) which it

contained. *Voievodi* were severally known as first (or great) *voievodi*, second *voievodi*, third *voievodi*, and so forth, and the dignity of their functions followed in like order. Thus, the first place belonged to the first *voievoda* of the great regiment, the second to the first *voievoda* of the right wing, the third to the first *voievodi*[1] of the advanced and rear guards (these two officers were equal in seniority), the fourth to the first *voievoda* of the left wing, the fifth to the second *voievoda* of the great regiment, the sixth to the second *voievoda* of the right wing,—and so forth. If, therefore, two kinsmen were appointed *voievodi* in the same army, one of whom—the senior—stood, say, two places higher, through genealogy or *otechestvo*, than the junior; then, should the senior be appointed, say, first *voievoda* of the great regiment, the junior was bound to be appointed first *voievoda* either of the advanced or the rear guard—not a place higher or a place lower. On the other hand, should this not be done, and the junior be appointed, say, a step higher than was his *miestnichestvo* due (in this case to be first *voievoda* of the right wing), then the senior of the two kinsmen was entitled to complain to the Tsar that the improper elevation of his junior relative threatened him with "loss of honour" (*i.e.* loss of *otechestvo*), since all members of his own family (not to speak of other families) who had hitherto reckoned themselves his *equals* would thenceforth begin "to supplant and to debase him," in that they would be encouraged to look upon themselves as promoted to a place higher than the man who now *seemed* to stand two places below them. If, on the other hand, the junior kinsman was appointed to a post in an army at a grade lower than was his due (in the above case, of course, to be first *voievoda* of the left wing), he could lay a like complaint before the Tsar, on the plea that for him to serve on such a footing with his senior kinsman would cause a "sundering from" the latter, and entail upon the complainant a certain loss of caste, since all his other kinsmen would gain a "place" upon him.

This example will at least serve to show us why the hierarchy of "places" was made to conform to the genealogy of individuals in all calculations of precedence. Still more complex was the reckoning which determined *miestnichestvo* relations between persons who were in no way connected through kinship. If two members of separate families were nominated to posts in which they were to be closely

[1] Note that this word is in the plural.

associated, yet in which one of them would have to be subordinate to the other, they would first calculate the distance between themselves by service *otechestvo*. Usually taking as their basis the service records of their respective kinsfolk in the ascending line, both direct and collateral, they would search the official *razriadi* for any precedents (*sluchai*) of their forefathers having held posts together under similar conditions to the present juncture, and if they met with any such precedent they next proceeded to calculate the difference in dignity between the posts held by those respective forefathers, and thereafter to make that distance the basis of a fresh calculation as to the present service relation existing between the two families—*i.e.* as to the comparative service *otechestvo* of the latter. That relation determined, the two nominees next applied themselves to *their own* genealogical records, and calculated therefrom their respective distances from the particular forefather who had been shown by the precedent in question to have been associated in service with the forefather of the other nominee. If this distance proved to be identical in both cases, then the nominees could accept appointment to similar posts to those held by their forefathers—*i.e.* to posts standing at a similar hierarchical distance from one another; but if one of the nominees was found to be standing at a greater distance from his forefather than his rival happened to be standing from *his*, he had to take rank below that rival by a corresponding number of places. If, for instance, one of the two ancestors concerned had served as first *voievoda* of a great regiment, and the other one merely as first *vöievoda* of a left wing, then the former would be considered to have stood to the latter, by family *otechestvo*, as father to eldest son ("*bwit emu shto otetz*"—*i.e.* to have "been to him as a father"). In other words, he would be considered to have been divided from him by *two* places, since the first *voievoda* of a left wing held the *fourth* place in an army—the same place as we have seen to be filled by the eldest son of a family with regard to the father. The same rule applied to their descendants. Next, when this common service relation of the two families had been established, it remained only to consult the *Rodoslovetz*, so as to ascertain the individual genealogical position of each of the two nominees with regard to his own family. If one of the nominees was found to stand, say, six places from the founder of his family, and the other one only five, then the latter could not serve as

the first *voievoda* of a left wing on any occasion when the former was appointed to be first *voievoda* of a great regiment, but must be promoted a step higher. Thus the permanent *miestnichestvo* relation of families, as recorded in the *razriadi*, was governed by a coefficient of generations which determined the genealogical position of each individual boyar in his own family.

While, therefore, the *Rodoslovetz* established the mutual service relation to one another of members of the same family, *razriadi* established the relation to one another of different families as a whole, and the *Rodoslovetz* and *razriadi* jointly the relation to one another of individual members of different families. Consequently, from what I have said it will be seen that the *miestnichestvo* system of reckoning greatly complicated the filling up of appointments. Particularly in the allocation of military commands must the clerks of the *Razriadni Prikaz* have experienced endless difficulties in compiling lists of individuals which should provide for all sorts and degrees of genealogical and service relations, yet reconcile all possible family claims. Few "gazettes" of military commanders can have failed to produce a large crop of quarrels and petitions concerning the relative dignity of given posts assigned, as well as numberless complaints concerning "hurt to *otechestvo*,"—the complexity of it all being increased by the fact that young scions of the aristocracy often disputed right of precedence even with the *voievodi* of corps to which they were attached only for staff or special duties. At length these difficulties led to legislation being passed in limitation of the *miestnichestvo*, and, by an agreement concluded in 1550 between the Tsar and the Council of Boyars, certain posts as *voievoda* were exempted from the *miestnichestvo* system of calculation, and declared "apart from places." Another condition of the agreement was that the first *voievoda* of a right wing should no longer take precedence, whether real or fictitious, of the second *voievoda* of a great regiment, seeing that the former only stood three places higher than the latter; also that, in future, first *voievodi* of advanced or rear guards should rank with *voievodi* of a right wing, and that service of young aristocrats under the command of a *voievoda* of lesser social rank than themselves was not to be counted for nomination to appointments as *voievoda*. Finally, on certain occasions (*i.e.* for special court or other functions) *all* posts as *voievoda* were to be exempted from the operation of the *miestnichestvo*.

The system of *miestnichestvo* calculation in itself provides the key to the idea of the institution. That idea was the strictly conservative and aristocratic notion that both in service and around the throne, later generations of a *rodoslovnaia familia* should always take the same rank as earlier generations of such a *familia* had done, and that relations between families, when once established, should never change. In short, the *miestnichestvo* did not establish *family* succession to service posts (as did the feudal system), but succession to *service relations between families*. In this we see an explanation of the negligible importance, under the *miestnichestvo*, of administrative functions. A post signified nothing in itself; its relation to the *otechestvo* of its holder was but the relation of an arithmetical cipher to an algebraical *formula* —*i.e.* the relation of a concrete accident. A boyar was ready to fill any post which suited his taste so long only as those associated with him in it stood lower than he did, and instances even occurred where several successive military expeditions found one and the same officer filling the post of *voievoda* in a constantly descending degree of seniority: such descent in dignity being due, not to any demerits of service on his part, but to his *miestnichestvo* relation to his comrades, the *voievodi* of the other regiments. It was not so much posts that mattered as the mutual relation of individuals in connection with them. Consequently, under the *miestnichestvo* system, posts possessed an importance precisely contrary to that which they now possess. At the present day the administrative status of an individual is determined by his office—*i.e.* by the degree of authority or responsibility which attaches to his duties; whereas, under the *miestnichestvo*, the office assigned to a given individual was determined by his genealogical position. Similarly, it is usual with us to say that a post should adorn the holder; whereas in those days the idea was that the holder should adorn his post.

I have before referred to the fact that the Princes of Odoiev (to take one instance) always stood higher in the service than did the Buturlin and certain other of the original Muscovite boyar families. This was due to one of the rules of the Muscovite genealogical system—namely, to the rule that princes who had come straight to Moscow from appanages of their own should always rank above princes or plain boyars who had come thither after serving princes of other appanages. Accordingly, since the *miestnichestvo* was a practical application of those rules to the service relations of Muscovite officialdom, we are enabled to

form a more or less approximate estimate of the period when the system first became compounded. Its elements are to be met with as early as appanage days, both at the court of Moscow and at those of other principalities, since at all those establishments we can discern at least an *outline* of the idea of service seniority in the way in which boyars grouped themselves around the throne and made periodical demands that their stations at court should always be the same as their forefathers' had been. Likewise we see indications of such grouping and demands in connection also with *administrative* posts, as well as of a certain recognition of *sluchai* or precedents as possessing a binding force. Nevertheless appanage unrest among the uncovenanted official classes always prevented those classes from attaining any real stability of organisation, since their position at princely courts was determined only by conditions of *temporary*, *personal* contract with the local ruler. Consequently the boyars of a given appanage would no sooner have settled down and fitted themselves into their several stations and functions than some new servitor of high standing would arrive, and make a fresh "treaty and bond" with the prince: with the result that he would be assigned a station superior to those of some of the old-established retainers, and thus upset the existing order of places. For instance, in 1408 there entered the service of Moscow a grandson of Guedemin's, Prince Patricius; and when, later, the latter's son, Prince Yuri (the subsequent founder of the Golitzin and Kurakin families), also entered the service, he was awarded a post above some of the older Muscovite retainers, for the reason that the Suzerain Prince of Moscow had granted him the hand of his sister in marriage, and so had "sought him out a place among his boyars." Now, this same Yuri had an elder brother, Prince Feodor Chovanski, who, on being accorded a seat at Yuri's wedding ceremony below Feodor Sabur, the *doyen* of the Muscovite boyars (whose great-great-grandfather had entered the Muscovite service in Ivan Kalita's time), said to Sabur: "Place thou thyself above my younger brother, Prince Yuri."[1] To this, however, Sabur retorted: "Thy brother hath been granted fortune of God in his wife, but unto thee God hath not granted such,"—and proceeded to take his seat above Chovanski. Such opportunities of attaining high degree through marriage ceased when a great influx of *ci-devant* appanage princes into the Muscovite service did away with the old individual

[1] That is to say, "but not above *me*."

summons to court, and so necessitated a replacing of the personal, private contract between Prince and boyar with *ulozhenïe* or public appraisement of the service fitness of each individual official. Only in Moscow itself did the elements of the *miestnichestvo* ever attain formation as a regular system; the period of which formation may be taken to have synchronised with the first great influx of princes—*i.e.* to have comprised the times of Ivan III. and his son Vassilii. Up to that period two, and two alone, of the bases of the *miestnichestvo* were in course of preparation—namely, substitution of *ulozhenïe* for a personal engagement by the Suzerain Prince, and completion of the tale of boyar families among whom *miestnichestvo* relations were subsequently to become operative; and inasmuch as it was only *after* that period that the boyar families of Moscow began to be ranged in prescribed ranks, few of the lines of ancestors to whose service relations their descendants of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries appealed when disputing mutual genealogical and service claims can have arisen earlier than the reign of Ivan III. At all events it is only approximately at that period that most of the eminent Muscovite families who later formed the principal links in the *miestnichestvo* chain make their appearance in the *Rodoslovetz*.

We are now in a position to realise the political significance of the *miestnichestvo* system for the Muscovite boyars. First and foremost, the system made their service relations dependent upon the service of their ancestors—or, in other words, it made the political status of the individual or of the family independent alike of the personal favour of the Tsar and of the personal service or achievements of servitors[1] themselves. As ancestors had stood, so must their descendants stand, and neither the goodwill of the Crown nor services to the State nor even the personal talents of the individual himself could alter that fixed, hereditary ratio. Service rivalry now became impossible, since the official position of a servitor was predetermined—was inherited, not conferred or won. Consequently the service career of an individual was not the personal affair, the private interest, of the servitor alone, but all his movements in the service were closely followed by the rest of his family, for the reason that each professional achievement of his, each *miestnichestvo* gain on his part, raised his kinsmen *en masse*, even as each *miestnichestvo*

[1] Here and hereafter this term "servitor" signifies a boyar or official person in the military or civil service of the State.

loss degraded them. Families took part in professional quarrels as a united whole, since the bond of kinship now established among relatives a service solidarity, a mutual responsibility, a common guarantee of family honour which caused individual relations to give way to family ties, and moral aspirations to become sacrificed to the interests of the clan. In 1598 a certain Prince Pepnin Obolenski was posted to a military force at a lower grade than was a Prince Ivan Sitski—a proceeding for which there was no apparent reason, in view of the service position of Pepnin's family. Nevertheless, he omitted to lay a complaint before the Tsar, on the score that (so he himself expressed it) he and Prince Sitski were "brethren through wedlock and close friends." Pepnin's *relatives*, however, were highly offended, and Prince Nogotkov Obolenski represented to the Tsar, "*on behalf of all the Princes Obolenski*," that, in still remaining friends with Sitski and entering no protest against him, Prince Pepnin had done what would inevitably bring insult and injury upon all the house of Obolenski at the hands of other boyar families. The Tsar considered the matter, and decided that, inasmuch as Prince Pepnin had proceeded on service on amicable terms with Sitski, it was Pepnin alone who was "in default" to the latter. That is to say, Pepnin had lowered *himself* only in the eyes of Sitski and Sitski's family — none of the "hurt to *otechestvo*" extending to Pepnin's relatives, the Princes Obolenski as a whole. Thus the *miestnichestvo* system had a *defensive* character, and was used by the aristocracy of the service to guard themselves both from above (*i.e.* from the chance caprice of the Tsar) and from below (*i.e.* from accidents and intrigues emanating from ambitious individuals who might seek to raise themselves above their proper *otechestvo* or inherited position). That, above all things, is why the boyars set so much store upon the system. "It was for places"[1]—thus ran a boyar saying of the seventeenth century—"that our fathers died." A boyar might be assassinated, or expelled from office, or deprived of his property, but he could not be compelled to accept a post in the administration or at court at a lower grade than his *otechestvo* warranted. Therefore it follows that, while limiting *rodoslovnia familii* in the sphere of their activity, the *miestnichestvo* system drew a clear dividing-line between the mass of military-official persons as a whole and the class from which, *par excellence*, the

[1] *i.e.* grades of dignity.

supreme power was compelled to draw the bulk of its nominees for administrative posts. This created for the class in question a political right—a political privilege, rather—of participation in the work of government, and so invested the boyars with the character of a ruling caste or corporate aristocracy. This view of the *miestnichestvo* and the boyars found support in the supreme power itself. One of the many instances in which we see that power regarding the system as the mainstay, the principal guarantee, of the boyars' political position may here be cited. In 1616 a Prince Volkonski—a man of plebeian birth, but able to boast of a long record of service—laid a complaint before the Tsar that his career entitled him to rank above a certain boyar named Golovin. The plea, however, was met by Golovin with the assertion that, in laying the complaint at all, Volkonski had dishonoured the whole of his (Golovin's) house, and so had entitled that house to seek of the Tsar "protection." Thereupon the Tsar issued an *ukaz* to the boyars to debate the matter in council: the upshot of which was that they decided to commit Prince Volkonski to gaol —at the same time reminding him that he was not a member of a *rodoslovnaia familia*, but only a person of the kind whom the Tsar had commanded should be accorded neither rights nor reckonings of *otechestvo* as against persons duly registered in the *Rodoslovetz*. As for Volkonski's service, they added, "the Tsar doth pay for service in estates and money, and not in *otechestvo*." Thus the Tsar could *enrich* a servitor, but he could not *ennoble* him, since nobility came of ancestors, and dead ancestors could not be made either more noble or less noble than they had been in life. In short, when the Muscovite order of boyars became formed out of its aggregate of heterogeneous, diffuse elements into an organised administrative class, the ultimate formation issued as an uniformly aristocratic one.

Thus two faults inherent in the *miestnichestvo* system communicated to the aristocratic status of the boyars a peculiar stamp. In the first place, by introducing clan feeling into the public service, the system restricted the supreme power in its most sensitive prerogative —namely, in the right of selecting suitable agents and executants of its will. However much the State had need of capable and obedient servants, the *miestnichestvo* could offer it only insubordinate (and frequently dull-witted) aristocrats. To appraise fitness for posts by the origin or the performance of ancestors meant subordination of

the service of the State to a custom which had its roots in the manners and ideas of *private life*, but which, of its very nature, became anti-social as soon as ever it was applied to the sphere of *public right*. The *miestnichestvo* was such a custom, and the country bore with it only so long as the State either did not understand its own functions or was unable to find among the lower orders of the population a sufficiency of men suitable for the service. Peter the Great looked upon the *miestnichestvo* purely from the State's point of view, and called it "an exceedingly oppressive and hurtful custom which men do reverence as a law." In this way the *miestnichestvo* nourished a constant, though suppressed, feeling of irritation between Tsar and boyars—a factor which, of course, tended to diminish rather than to increase the strength of the class for which the system served as its chief, if not its only, means of support; while, at the same time, through welding kinsfolk into responsible family corporations, it divided *individual* families, since it caused petty competition for posts to introduce an element of rivalry, envy, and strife into their midst. Another of its inherent faults was that, through laying excessive emphasis upon the sentiment of family honour, it blunted the sense of *social and public interest*, and thus destroyed the integrity of the community, both morally and from the political point of view. In short, the *miestnichestvo* was harmful both to the State and to the boyars themselves, despite the great value which the latter set upon the system.

CHAPTER IV

Relations of the new Muscovite order of boyars to the Tsar—Relations of the Muscovite boyars of appanage days to the Suzerain Prince—Change in those relations with the times of Ivan III.—Collisions between Tsar and boyars—Uncertainty of the cause of quarrel—Conversation between Bersen and Maxim the Greek—Boyar administration—Correspondence between Ivan IV. and Prince Kurbski—Kurbski's indictment of Ivan—Ivan's reply to the same—Character of the correspondence—The dynastic source of the quarrel.

We have seen that the political unification of Great Rus brought about a change both in the composition and in the political attitude of the Muscovite boyars. This circumstance was bound to bring about a corresponding change in the good relations which had existed between the ruler of Moscow and his boyars during the appanage period, since such a change was the inevitable result of the process which had created both the Muscovite Tsar and his new boyars. In appanage days a boyar entered the service of Moscow for the reason that he sought new emoluments; and since, of course, those emoluments increased in proportion as his master rose in the world, the circumstance established unity of interests between the two. Accordingly, the fourteenth-century boyars of Moscow assisted their ruler wholeheartedly in his external policy, as well as saw zealously to his interests in internal administration. The close tie and cordial relations existent between the two parties runs like a clear thread through all the Muscovite annals of the period. Thus Simeon Gordii writes, in his testamentary address to his younger brethren: "Hearken ye in all things to our holy father Alexis and to the elder boyars, who alway have wished well unto our father and ourselves." Still more clearly does the cordiality of those relations stand out in a fourteenth-century biography of Dmitri Donskoi (who owed his throne to his boyars) where, addressing himself to his sons, he says: "Love ye your boyars, and grant unto them honour meet unto their services; nor do aught without their will." Speaking, next, to the boyars themselves, the Prince reminds them, in feeling terms, how he has worked

with them in matters foreign and domestic, and how together they have strengthened the Principality, and made themselves a terror to the foes of the Russian land. Finally he concludes: "I have loved ye all, and held ye all in honour. With ye I have rejoiced, and with ye I have sorrowed, and under me ye have been known, not as boyars, but as princes of my land."

These good relations, however, became marred with the close of the fifteenth century. The new titled boyars had come to Moscow, not in search of fresh emoluments, but in a state of irritation at having lost the emoluments which had belonged to their vanished appanage independence. Only necessity and compulsion bound them to Muscovy, and they could feel no affection for the new scene of their service. Beginning by diverging in their *interests*, the two sides went on to diverge also in their *political sentiments*, even though those sentiments were born of a common source. This circumstance helped, on the one hand, to raise the Muscovite Suzerain Prince to the height of a national sovereign with extensive powers, and, on the other hand, to fasten upon him an administrative *personnel* not only possessed of pretentious political tastes and aspirations, but prone to adopt a corporate attitude which greatly hampered the supreme power. Realising that they ruled the roost in the Kremlin, the new titled boyars began to regard themselves in a manner to which the old Muscovite boyars of the appanage period had never ventured to aspire; while, for his part, the Suzerain Prince now felt himself to be Sovereign of a united Great Rus, and so found it difficult to transfer his old relations to the new boyars, and impossible to brook their claims to a share in the government. In short, the same cause—the unification of Great Rus—rendered the Muscovite supreme power less and less complacent and yielding and the new Muscovite boyars more and more pretentious and arrogant; until an identical set of historical circumstances may be said to have destroyed not only unity of interests between the two political forces, but also the harmony of their mutual relations. This brought about a series of collisions between the Tsar of Moscow and his boyars which imparts a dramatic element to the monotonous, ceremonious life of the Muscovite court of their day—produces an impression of a constant political struggle being in progress between the Muscovite ruler and his truculent boyars. At the same time, the struggle was a very peculiar one, both in the methods of the

contestants and in the motives which governed it. Though holding stoutly to their claims, the boyars never rose in *open revolt* against their Sovereign—never took up actual arms against him or even showed passive political opposition. Differences between them were settled by court intrigues on the one side and awards of court disgrace on the other—awards for which it is not always easy to discern the reason. In short, the struggle was an affair of court enmity rather than of open political strife; it was pantomime rather than drama.

Twice we see particularly heated friction arising from one and the same source—namely, from the question of the succession to the throne. As already seen, Ivan III. began his policy by nominating as his successor his grandson Dmitri. Yet, after crowning him to the office, he deposed him, and named in his stead his (Ivan's) son by his second wife—Vassilii. In this family feud the boyars were for the grandson: the chief reason for their opposition to Vassilii being ill-will towards his mother and the Byzantine ideas and suggestions which she had brought with her; while on the side of Vassilii were ranged all the minor and more needy officials in the Muscovite service. The feud waxed exceedingly bitter on both sides, and evoked turbulent scenes at court, sharp sallies from the boyar camp, and something closely approaching treason. At all events, in later days Vassilii's son, Ivan IV., complained that the boyars had "conspired many terrible deaths" against his father and his father's nephew Dmitri, as well as "spoken many insulting and reproachful words" to his grandfather. Nevertheless the course of the affair does not make it altogether clear how far the boyars were successful. All we know is that, during the year after Dmitri's coronation (1498), several of the leading boyars of Moscow suffered for their opposition to Vassilii—Prince Simeon Riapolovski (formerly Appanage Prince of Starodub) being beheaded, and two of his adherents (Prince Ivan Yuri Patrikiev and his son Vassilii—the last-named of whom was destined afterwards to become the famous monk known as Vassian Kossoi [1]) being forcibly immured in a monastery. The same deep-lying enmity and awards of banishment from court continued throughout the reign of Vassilii, who treated his boyars with a not unnatural distrust, seeing that he was conscious of being a ruler whom they had no desire to see seated upon the throne. Among other things, he took occasion to imprison a

[1] Vassian the Squint-Eyed.

leading noble named Prince Cholmski, who had married a sister of the Tsar's, and whose father was still ruler of the appanage of Tver; while a State Councillor of the second rank named Bersen Beklemishev was beheaded for a number of insulting speeches which he had made concerning the Tsar and his mother. Under Ivan IV. this growing hostility came to a white heat again over the old question of the succession to the throne. Soon after the conquest of the Khanate of Kazan (*i.e.* at about the close of the year 1552, or the beginning of the following year) Ivan was seized with a dangerous illness, and commanded the boyars forthwith to swear allegiance to his newly-born son, the Tsarevitch Dmitri. Many of the upper grade of boyars refused to do this, or else took the oath unwillingly, on the plea that they did not wish to serve "the young one in place of the old"—by which they meant that they desired rather to serve the Tsar's cousin, Prince Vladimir Andreivitch, whom they meditated placing upon the throne as soon as ever the old Tsar should die. Roused by this opposition, Ivan gave vent to such an outburst against the boyars that the resultant rupture lasted for several years, and was accompanied by many arbitrary banishments from court and other penalties.

Although, in these collisions, we can discern the *immediate* cause of the outbreak, it is difficult to say what were the *ulterior motives* which inspired the two contending parties to a mutual antagonism which lasted for three generations. Ivan III. used bitterly to complain of the persistent turbulence of his boyars; so much so that, when dispatching emissaries to Poland after the affair of the succession, he laid upon his messengers the following injunction: "Look ye that in all things ye be forbearing—that ye drink with caution, and not unto drunkenness, but rather do guard yourselves ever, and act not as did the Prince Simeon Riapolovski when he bore himself arrogantly in company with the Prince Vassilii, son of the Prince Ivan Yurievitch" (the Prince Patrikiev above mentioned). Nevertheless, when we arrive at Vassilii's reign we acquire a rather clearer insight into the feelings and aspirations of the disaffected boyars, since there has come down to us from that period a manuscript which throws a good deal of light upon the political attitude of the recalcitrant party. The document in question consists of an extract from the minutes of the trial (in 1525) of the Bersen Beklemishev above alluded to—a man who, though not in any way a leading boyar,

was a stubborn and forceful personality. In those days there was resident in Moscow a learned monk named Maxim the Greek, who, summoned from Mount Athos to translate the Greek Annotated Psalter into Russian, was not only an experienced, polished man of the world, but also a scholar who, educated at Paris, Florence, and Venice, had gained a wide acquaintance with the Catholic West and its culture. To him resorted many members of the Muscovite aristocracy who had a taste for letters; until such was the throng of visitors who assembled to argue with him "concerning the books and the customs of Tsargorod" that his cell in the suburban monastery of St. Simeon came to resemble a regular literary club. It is interesting to note that Maxim's most regular visitors belonged exclusively to the disaffected boyar party. A particularly close and argumentative intimate of the *savant* was the Bersen above mentioned, and the two used to hold long and frequent colloquies together. At that time Bersen was under a cloud at court, for the reason that, in justification of his thorny name (*bersen*, in old Slavonic, means a gooseberry-bush), he had made some pointed remark to the Tsar during a Council on the question of Smolensk; whereupon the Sovereign had lost his temper, and expelled Bersen from the Council, saying: "Begone, *smerd!* I have no further need of thee!" In all his talks with Maxim, Bersen's one unfailing theme was his grievances; and it is from an extract of such a discourse that we are enabled to form an idea of the political schemes of the boyars of that day. I will give the extract precisely as it was read from written notes at Bersen's trial. In it we have one of the extremely rare instances in which we can actually listen to an intimate political conversation of the kind that was held in Moscow of the sixteenth century.

The disgraced Councillor was in a very bad humour. He was dissatisfied with the State of Moscow, with its people, and with its institutions. "Of men here I do say that there is no truth among them." Most of all he felt dissatisfied with his Sovereign: nor, before a foreigner, did he trouble to conceal that dissatisfaction.

"Behold," he began to the aged Maxim, "ye have Tsars in Tsargorod who do oppress you, and who have brought you upon evil times. How shift ye with them?"

"Of a truth," answered Maxim, "our Tsars are men without faith. Yet do they not meddle with affairs of the Church."

"Verily," exclaimed Bersen, "if ye have Tsars who be without faith, yet do act after this manner, there doth still remain a God among you!" And, as though to justify the implied assertion that a God no longer remained in Moscow, the dissatisfied Councillor went on to complain of the Muscovite Metropolitan, whom he alleged to be currying favour with the Tsar, and neglecting one of the prime duties of his office, by omitting to plead with the Sovereign on behalf of persons who had fallen under disgrace at court. Then, suddenly giving rein to all his angry pessimism, Bersen turned upon Maxim himself.

"And for thee, friend Maxim," he said, "have we not received thee from the Holy Mount? Yet what help have we gained of thee?"

"I am a man of God," answered Maxim, somewhat offendedly. "What help, therefore, should ye have of me in such matters?"

"Nay, but thou art also a man of parts," protested Bersen, "and shouldst have brought us advantage, in that we might have learnt of thee how the Tsar should best order his land, and reward men after their deserts, and bear himself toward the Metropolitan."

"Ye have books and precepts," his companion replied, "and therefore ye may order these things for yourselves."

This remark led Bersen to represent to Maxim that the fact was that the Tsar never sought the advice of prudent councillors (such as Bersen Beklemishev, for instance) concerning the proper ordering of the land; wherefore he ordered it badly. It was this same "asking not of counsel," this "highmindedness," in Vassilii's policy, that above all things vexed the speaker. Of Ivan III., however, he spoke with more indulgence. According to Bersen, Ivan had been kind-hearted and gracious to his people, and had therefore been aided of God in all things. Moreover, he had always loved an "encounter"—*i.e.* a speech directed against himself. "But our Tsar of to-day," lamented the ex-Councillor, "is not such a one. He pitieth not men, nor yet yieldeth. Likewise, he loveth not contrary speech, but doth conceive anger against them who do speak it."

Bersen, therefore, was greatly dissatisfied with his Sovereign. Yet the ex-Councillor's dissatisfaction was a sentiment essentially conservative in its nature. Of late, old Muscovite institutions had begun to totter, and it was the Tsar himself who was shaking them. This was

the head and front of Bersen's complaint. In this connection he went on to expound the whole philosophy of political conservatism.

"Thou thyself knowest," he said to Maxim, "(even as we also have heard it from prudent men) that the land which doth forsake its ancient customs standeth not for long. Behold, here is our Suzerain Prince beginning to change our ancient usage! What honour, therefore, should he look for from us?"

Thereupon Maxim explained that, although God punished nations for breaking His commandments, Tsars were at liberty to change the customs of their realms if circumstances or the interests of the State demanded it.

"Verily," agreed Bersen. "Yet were it better to maintain ancient usage, and to recompense men, and to reverence elders. To-day our Tsar hath been set these three days in his chamber! *There* is it that he dealeth with affairs!"[1]

Thus it was to changes in old Russian customs that Bersen attributed both the external perils and the internal disorders from which the land was suffering; while as chief culprit in such digressions from ancient usage, as chief instigator of such settings aside of native precedent, he denounced the Tsar's mother, the Princess Sophia.

"Since the time that the Greeks came hither," he said to Maxim, "our land hath been thrown into confusion, even though it did once live in peace and quietness. Straightway when the Suzerain Princess Sophia did come hither with those Greeks of thine there hath arisen among us such strife as there is in Tsargorod, under *your* Tsars."

Upon this Maxim seems to have thought it incumbent upon him to stand up for his native country.

"The Suzerain Princess Sophia cometh of high birth on either side," he said. "Through her father she doth come of the Imperial house of Tsargorod, and, through her mother, of the great Duke of Ferrara, of the land of Italy."

"What signifieth it who she be? She hath come hither to our undoing," was Bersen's closing retort.

From this we see that, provided Bersen correctly expressed the views of the disaffected boyars of his day, their discontent was due, firstly, to the infringement of time-honoured administrative methods;

[1] By this speech Bersen meant that the Tsar was holding secret conclaves with a few chosen intimates, instead of transacting affairs of State in open council.

secondly, to the Tsar's distrust of themselves; and, thirdly, to the fact that, side by side with the Boyar Council, he maintained an inner cabinet composed of a few chosen individuals—persons with whom he held preliminary conferences, and with whom he prejudged questions of State which ought first of all to have been submitted to the Council itself. It will be noted that Bersen was not demanding any new rights for his order, but standing out for old customs which the Tsar had broken through. He was a disaffected Conservative and opponent of the Tsar merely because he disliked the changes which that ruler had introduced.

After Vassilii's death, and during the minority of his son (a minority which necessitated a prolonged regency), power remained almost wholly in the hands of the boyars. Consequently they had full opportunity of administering the land unhindered, of advancing their own political ideas, and of reconstructing the order of State in accordance with their own peculiar notions. Nevertheless they never so much as attempted to construct a new order of State. Dividing themselves into two parties (the party of the Princes Shuiski and the party of the Princes Bielski), they maintained violent feuds among themselves concerning *personal* or *family* matters, but never concerning any particular form of government. During all the ten years which followed upon the death (in 1538) of the Princess-Regent Helena they continued these constant quarrels: with the result that that period not only proved barren of improvement as regards their political position, but actually lowered their political authority in the eyes of the rest of the Russian community, since all could now perceive that the boyars were a purely anarchistic force so long as there was no strong restraining hand upon them.

Hitherto the actual cause of the rupture between Tsar and boyars has remained conjectural, but with the renewal of the struggle between the two parties in the reign of Ivan IV. two of the individual contestants took occasion to express their political views more clearly, and so to shed some light upon the causes of their mutual dislike. In 1564 a boyar named Prince Andrew Kurbski—a man of about the same age as Ivan, and a great friend of his, as well as a soldier who had done good service in the wars against Kazan and Livonia—was in command of the Muscovite forces in the last-named region, and lost an important battle there. Whether it was this mishap, or whether it was his intimacy with Adashev and Silvester (both of whom had now been

banished by Ivan from his dominions) which made him dread the Tsar's anger, but at all events he abandoned his wife and infant son at Dorpat, deserted to the service of the Polish king, and took an active part in the subsequent fighting against his rightful sovereign and country. Yet, since he felt that he could not leave the service of his late master without a word, he sent the Tsar a letter from Poland in which he strongly condemned Ivan's high-handed treatment of his boyars. Ivan—himself a "rhetorician of lettered cunning," as some of his contemporaries called him—was not going to be outdone by a mere deserter, and so answered him in a long, self-exculpatory document which Kurbski, in his reply to the same, describes as "long-discoursing and much-sounding." This correspondence was carried on, at intervals, from the year 1564 to the year 1579—Kurbski inditing four letters to Ivan, and Ivan two to Kurbski. Nevertheless the length of Ivan's first epistle causes it to constitute more than half the entire correspondence, seeing that it covers no less than 62 pages out of the 100 which make up Ustrialov's version of the series. In addition, Kurbski composed a work accusatory of Ivan to which he gave the title of "A History of the Tsar of Moscow," but which really constituted a summary of the political views of his late brethren, the Russian boyars. From the manner in which the two sides fulminate against one another, one might have expected them incidentally to give free and full expression to their political opinions—*i.e.* to reveal the *causes* of their mutual dislike; yet in all this epistolary duel (which was conducted by both parties with great ardour and skill) not a single word is to be found which may be taken as a clear, direct answer to the question at issue. Consequently the correspondence does nothing to relieve the reader of his perplexity. Yet, though Kurbski's letters contain little beyond personal or class reproaches and political grievances, his "History" has in it a few passages in which he gives utterance to political and historical opinions of a general nature.

He begins the work with despondent reflections. "Many a time and oft have I been beset with the question: 'In what manner have these things come of the throne of a once good and gracious Tsar, who did neglect his health for his country, who did endure many toils and tribulations in the struggle with the foes of the Cross of Christ, and who aforetime hath won of all men a goodly report?' Many a time and oft have I kept silence with sighs and tears, seeing that I

desired not to answer this question; but at length, being constrained to speak concerning events, I have replied to the many askings: 'If I were to relate all things in order and from the beginning, of a surety should I be forced to write many things concerning how that the Devil hath sown evil manners in this goodly house of Russian Princes, and especially through their evil wives and sorceresses (as did happen also unto the Kings of Israel), and, in measure above all, through the wives whom they have taken of strange peoples.'" This means that Prince Kurbski took the same view of Moscow's recent history as Bersen had done—that he discerned the root of the whole evil in the Tsarevna Sophia and the other foreign Princess (Helena Glinskaia, the mother of the reigning Tsar) who had followed her. Through them it was that the "goodly house of Russian Princes" had degenerated into the existing Muscovite house—into "this ever-bloodthirsty stock of thine," as he phrases it in one of his letters to Ivan. He also writes in his "History": "From olden times it hath alway been the custom of the Russian Princes to seek the blood of their brethren, and to slay them for their miserable and waste *otchini*, for the reason that those Princes could never be satisfied." With Kurbski political opinions first evolved themselves as principles or theories. The normal order of State he considered to be one that was founded, not upon the sole, personal oversight of the supreme power alone, but upon participation in the work of government by a "*sinklit*" or boyar assembly. To transact the business of the State with efficiency and success the Tsar should consult his nobles. In short, the Tsar ought to represent the head of the body politic, and to cherish his trusty councillors "as he would his own limbs." Such was Kurbski's manner of expressing his ideal of regular and seemly relations between Tsar and boyars. Indeed, his "History" is built throughout upon one idea—namely, upon the idea of the beneficent influence of a boyar council. A Tsar, he implies, can rule well and gloriously only so long as he is surrounded by capable and trusty councillors. Yet a Tsar should share his power with the *whole* of his Imperial Council, not merely with a few individual members of it, however loyal and capable they may be. Consequently he (Kurbski) would permit of popular participation in the work of government, both through a council of boyars and through a territorial council—upon the need for, and utility of, which latter he lays especial stress. Thus the *thesis* propounded and developed in

the "History" amounts practically to this: "If a Tsar is respected in his realm, but has been granted of God no commanding gifts, he should repair for good and advantageous counsel, not only to his regular councillors, but also to men of the people, since gifts of intellect are bestowed, not in proportion to any external riches or any power of authority, but according to *spiritual* merit." By "men of the people" Kurbski evidently meant an assembly drawn from all classes of the people, and summoned from every quarter of the land, since private conferences between the Sovereign and individuals were by no means to his taste. Summarised, the substance of his political views was that a council of boyars ought to be accorded a definite place in the administration, and a territorial council to be admitted to a share in the work of government. Yet he was a little behindhand in his political notions. Not only had a place in the administration for a council of boyars already passed beyond the stage of ideals, but so also had participation by a territorial council in the work of government. Consequently neither of the two ideas was a fit subject for political speculation, seeing that both the one and the other was now an accomplished political fact—the former a fact of long standing, and the latter one of more recent date. Both, also, must have been known to our author, since from most ancient times the rulers of Rus had been accustomed to confer and to legislate with their boyars, while in the year 1550 there had been created the first territorial council—an event which Kurbski ought surely to have remembered, seeing that it was the first occasion on which the Tsar turned for advice to the "men of the people." Kurbski, therefore, stood for existing facts only; his political programme did not exceed the limits of the State order in being. Demanding neither new rights for the boyars nor new delimitations of their old ones, he sought no reconstruction of the existing machinery. That being so, he went but little further than did his predecessor, Bersen; while, for all his sharp condemnation of Moscow's recent past, he had nothing better to propose in its stead.

Now let us hear the other side. Ivan writes less calmly and concisely than does Kurbski, since anger retards the flow of his consecutive thought with a multitude of images, ideas, and emotions which he finds it hard to fit into the framework of an ordered, passionless exposition. At every moment the apt conception of a new phrase compels him to turn aside from his discourse, and to forget his leading

idea, while still leaving undeveloped the very conceit which has caused the deviation. Consequently it is no easy matter to grasp the fundamental *thesis*, the fundamental drift, of this fiery torrent of dialectic. At moments when his wrath is rising his speech assumes a caustic vein. "Thy third letter to hand," says he, "and hath been read with care. Under thy tongue lieth the venom of the asp, and though thy script be filled with honey of words, it holdeth also within it the bitterness of gall. Is it thus that thou, a Christian, dost serve a Christian Tsar? At the beginning thou dost write that thou art addressing thyself unto one who hath revealed himself an open foe to Orthodoxy and doth possess a leprous soul. Nay; rather is it that ye boyars, as devils, have, from my youth up, assaulted my honour, and have sought to ravish me of the supreme power which hath been granted me of God." In this sentence we see epitomised the fundamental *motif* which runs through all these letters of Ivan's. Nothing harrowed his soul so much as to think that the boyars might one day "ravish" his power as Tsar. To Kurbski's personal accusations he makes no reply: what he protests against is the type of political ideas cherished by the boyars, whose champion Kurbski has constituted himself. "Ever in thy devil-composed script thou dost insist upon one and the same thing, even though thou turnest it about with diverse words: to wit, thy fond conceit that slaves should possess themselves of power over their lords." (As a matter of fact, Kurbski had never said anything of the kind.) "Doth it, forsooth, show a leprous soul that a man should preserve his power in his own hands, instead of delivering it over unto slaves? Is it against reason that a man should will not to be ruled by slaves? Is it right Orthodoxy that he should lie under the authority of slaves?" Always "slaves," "slaves," and again "slaves." Though Kurbski discourses at length on the subject of "prudent councillors" and a "*sinklit*," Ivan declines to recognise any such councillors, or to admit any possible advantage in such an institution as the one suggested. For him there exist only men serving him at court—his court *slaves*. Any knowledge beyond the fact that "the land was ruled of old by the mercy of God and with the wisdom of our forefathers," and that, later, "the land hath been ruled by ourselves, its Tsars, and not by judges or *voievoedi*, by devices or conceits," he absolutely disclaims. For him the Autocracy is not only the normal, the divinely-established order of

State, but a factor in Russian history which had descended to it from remote ages. "The beginning of our Autocracy is of St. Vladimir. We were born and nurtured in the office of Tsar, and do possess it, and have not ravished what is not our own. From the first the Russian Autocrats have been lords of their own dominions, and not the boyar aristocrats." Ivan was the first ruler to express this view of the Autocracy of the Russian land. Such a view had been a stranger to ancient Rus, since the country had never yet connected the autocratic idea with any internal relations of State; it had merely accounted its *Samoderzetz* a ruler independent of any external foe. Ivan, however, looked more to the internal aspect of the supreme power than to the external, and was thoroughly permeated with his new view of it. All through his interminable first letter to Kurbski he keeps referring to the notion, and turning it—as he himself confesses—"*siemo i ovamo*," or hither and thither. His every political tenet is bound up with the conception of an Autocratic Tsar who shall be subject neither to "priests" nor "slaves." "Wherefore should a man be named *Samoderzetz* if he himself shall not govern?" Rule by the many would, in his opinion, be madness, while to the Autocracy he attributes a divine origin, and invests it not only with a political, but also with a high religious, function. "With zeal I do ever strive to lead men toward truth and toward the light, that they may confess the One True God, as glorified in the Trinity, and, through the grace granted unto me as Tsar, may cease from those feuds and perverse customs of living with which kingdoms are undone. If subjects submit not themselves unto their ruler, never shall strife cease in the land." To such an exalted vocation the innumerable qualifications necessary in an Autocrat must correspond. A Tsar should be circumspect—free both from ferocious savagery and from unconditional humility; ready to punish thieves and marauders; and at once merciful and severe (*i.e.* merciful to the good and severe upon the wicked). Unless he be all that, he is not Tsar. "Let the Tsar be a terror, not unto doers of good, but unto doers of evil. Wouldst thou not fear his power, then do thou good; wouldst thou fear him, then do thou evil: for the Tsar beareth not the sword in cruelty, but for the punishment of wicked men and the heartening of the righteous." On no other occasion before the time of Peter the Great do we see the supreme power (as regarded in its abstract conception) attain such a masterly—at all events, such an energetic—expression of its own

functions. Nevertheless, when it came to a question of furnishing a *practical* self-definition, this flight of Ivan's poetic fancy met with a fall, since his whole philosophy of the Autocracy summed itself up in the one simple phrase: "We are free to reward our slaves, even as we are free also to punish them." To find a parallel *formula* to this will cost us no great effort of memory, seeing that the old appanage princes arrived at identically the same conclusion (and that without the help of any lofty autocratic theories) when they said, in practically the same words as Ivan's: "I, such and such a Prince, am free touching whom I shall reward and whom I shall punish." Thus, in Ivan, the hereditary proprietor triumphed over the sovereign, even as it had done in his grandfather before him.

Although this was Ivan's political programme, it never—for all his original, incisive exposition of his ideal of the Autocracy—developed into a definite, finished political system, or proved productive of any practical results. Moreover, at no point in his exposition does he state whether his political ideal harmonised with the *existing* organisation of the State, or demand any new organisation of the same—for instance, such as that his autocratic power should work hand in hand with a select body of boyars (though that would have been only a *change* of political methods and customs), or that it should create for itself entirely new instruments of administration. All that we can gather from his correspondence with Kurbski is that the Tsar found his boyars a burden. Yet they had never acted in direct opposition to the Autocracy as it was then understood in Moscow—*i.e.* the Autocracy said to be derived from St. Vladimir—but had consistently recognised its authority as a thing created of history. All that they had ever done had been to insist upon the necessity and the advantage of granting a share in the administration to a second political force created of history —namely, to themselves, as well as of reinforcing those two with a third force, as represented by provincial representation. For that reason, said Kurbski, it was unjust that the Tsar should blame the boyars for excesses committed by the "blockhead priest" Silvester and the "dog" Adashev. Ivan had but himself to thank for those excesses, seeing that he had granted improper authority to those councillors —authority unbefitting for boyars to hold and so had made of them minions. Whence, then, arose this quarrel between Ivan and Kurbski, seeing that both of them stood for the existing order of

things? One feels that it must have arisen from the fact that they did not fully *understand* one another—that some unfortunate misconception divided the contestants. Probably that misconception was due to the circumstance that it was not two political *forms of thought* that collided in this correspondence, but two political *attitudes*. The contestants were not so much hurling polemics at one another as confessions of faith. In fact, Kurbski calls one of the Tsar's letters such a confession; remarking in jocular fashion that, since he (Kurbski) is not a presbyter, he feels unworthy to hear the Tsar's shrift with so much as the tip of one of his ears. Throughout, each party supports his own assertions with scant attention to those of the other. "Why killest thou us, thy faithful servants?" asks Prince Kurbski: to which Tsar Ivan replies: "Nay, not so. Rather have the Russian Autocrats ever ruled their dominions themselves, without the help of boyars or of magnates." In this simple excerpt we see the whole essence of this famous correspondence. Misunderstanding not only one another, but also their respective positions, neither antagonist hesitates to fling prophecies at his interlocutor, or to foretell his ruin. In his letter of 1579 Kurbski begins by reminding Ivan of the fate of Saul and his royal line, and then continues: "Destroy not thyself and thy house. Those stained with Christian blood shall vanish swiftly, and with all their kinsfolk." As for his own order, he represents it as a chosen body upon which rests a special blessing, and reproaches Ivan with wilfully creating difficulties for himself by killing and banishing "those strong in Israel, his God-given *voievodi*"—thus leaving himself only "such sorry *voievodi* as do dread the rustling of a leaf in the wind," let alone the advent of a foe. To these reproaches the Tsar replies with the historic menace: "Were ye of the seed of Abraham, then might ye do the deeds of Abraham. Yet peradventure God is minded to raise up of the stones of the earth new children unto Israel." These words were written in 1564, at a time when the Tsar was contemplating a bold stroke —namely, the creation of a new upper class, to replace the hated boyars.

Thus the two contestants were dissatisfied alike with one another and with the order of State wherein they played a part, and over which they exercised a certain control. Yet neither of the pair was able to devise a new order in conformity with his wishes, for the reason that everything desiderated by him was already in being, or else had become obsolete. Consequently it would appear that, for all this

wrangling and animosity, the matter in dispute was not the question of a State order at all, and that this flood of mutual recriminations and reproaches was vented to justify a dissatisfaction due to another source altogether. I have before stated that on two occasions the quarrel between Tsar and boyars manifested itself with especial virulence, and that on each occasion the immediate cause of the outbreak was the question of the succession to the throne—was the fact, that is to say, that the Tsar appointed one heir and the boyars desired to nominate another. This would seem to indicate that the rupture had a *dynastic* rather than a political origin, and that the matter in hand was not so much *how* to rule the State as *by whom* it was to be ruled. Indeed, herein both sides harked back to old appanage customs which had become abrogated by the course of events. In appanage days the boyar had been free to select his prince for a master, as also to transfer himself at will from one princely court to another. Yet, though the boyars had now no place of resort—at all events, no *convenient* place—left them but Moscow, they still seized every opportunity of endeavouring to nominate their own candidate to the throne: justifying their claim so to do by the absence of any law on the subject. In this respect the Tsar himself assisted them, since, in spite of the fact that he now looked upon himself as the national Sovereign of Rus as a whole, he still remained, as regards the one half of his consciousness, the *otchinnik*, or hereditary appanage-proprietor, of bygone days, and was therefore reluctant either to cede his right of testamentary disposition of his *otchina* or to place any legal restrictions upon his personal prerogative. "To whom I will, to him will I give the Princeship." In fact, the idea of any extraneous interference with his power of personal disposition touched Ivan far more closely than any general question of a State order could do: whence proceeded mutual soreness and distrust. Moreover, the instant that an occasion for venting those feelings either orally or in writing arose, *general* questions cropped up with them, and at once it grew manifest that the existing order of State was suffering from innate contradictions, and that, while corresponding but partially to conflicting interests, it satisfied none of them. That the contradictions in question manifested themselves with equal clearness in the *Oprichnina* or "Select Corps" which Ivan devised as a possible means of escape from his predicament I will show in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

The circumstances which led to the formation of the *Oprichnina*—The Tsar's extraordinary departure from Moscow, and his subsequent proclamations to the capital—The Tsar's return—His *ukas* appointing the *Oprichnina*—His life at Alexandrov—Relation of the *Oprichnina* to the *Zemstchina*—Purpose of the *Oprichnina*—A contradiction in the organisation of the Muscovite Empire—The idea of replacing the boyars with a burgher class—The futility of the *Oprichnina*, and some views of contemporary writers concerning that institution.

FIRST of all, let me explain the circumstances under which the sinister *Oprichnina* was formed.

When twenty years old—*i.e.* scarcely more than a boy—Ivan entered upon the duties of government with a zeal exceptional for his age. The sagacity of his tutors (the Metropolitan Makarius and the priest Silvester) led them to organise of the mutually hostile cliques of boyars a band of cautious, level-headed, able advisers, whom they stationed near the throne. This "chosen body," as Prince Kurbski calls them, seems very soon to have acquired a predominance both in the Boyar Council and in the central administration: with the result that, when the Tsar assumed the reins of government, with these trusty preceptors at his back, his administrative policy, during the first few years of his rulership, constituted a happy combination of bold foreign enterprises and broad, well-conceived plans of domestic reform. In 1550 he convened the first Territorial Council, which debated the question of the organisation of local government, and finally decided to examine and revise the *Sudebnik* or "Code of Laws" of Ivan III., with the object of evolving from it a new and better system of jurisprudence. Next, in 1551 Ivan convened a great Church Council, and submitted to it an extensive scheme of ecclesiastical reforms which were designed to reduce the religious life of the people to a system. Next, in 1552 he accomplished the conquest of the Khanate of Kazan, and then entered upon that complicated scheme for establishing local and provincial institutions which was destined eventually to replace the

old State-nominated provincial governors or *kormlenstchiki*. Thus local government was introduced. Lastly, in 1558 he began a war with Livonia, with the aim of penetrating to the Baltic, and so of establishing independent relations with Western Europe, and drawing upon its wealth of culture. In all these important undertakings he was assisted, as I have said, by a band of able co-adjutors, who grouped themselves around the Tsar's two chief intimates —a priest named Silvester and a boyar named Alexis Adashev (the latter the head of what would, in these days, be called the Secretariat for Petitions to the Throne). Nevertheless various causes—partly domestic misunderstandings, partly want of agreement in political views—gradually led the Tsar to cool in his affection for these favourite councillors, until, in the end, their everlasting hostility towards the Tsaritsa's relatives brought about their banishment from court. Indeed, the Tsar always attributed the death of his first wife, Anastasia Romanova (who died in 1560), to the annoyance caused her by these never-ending palace intrigues. "Why divided ye me from my wife?" he asks sadly, in a letter dispatched to Prince Kurbski eighteen years after that family bereavement. "Had ye not taken from me my *unitza*,[1] never had there been the slayings of the boyars." At length the defection of Kurbski, his most gifted and intimate fellow-worker, brought about a final rupture with the boyars, and it was not long before the resultant isolation, combined with a highly-strung temperament, resulted in depriving Ivan of that moral balance the equilibrium of which seldom remains long stable in the case of nervous subjects bereft of all companionship.

While the Tsar was in this condition a most strange and unprecedented event took place in the Kremlin. One day at the end of 1564 a train of sledges made its appearance at the door of the palace, and, without a word to any one, the Tsar collected his family and a few courtiers, packed up his furniture, sacred images, crosses, clothing, and treasure chests, and departed from Moscow. It was plain that this was no ordinary pilgrimage, nor yet a pleasure tour, but a regular flitting. Moscow gasped in amazement, and fell to conjecturing what its lord intended. Passing by Troïtsa, the Tsar halted, with all his belongings, at the little village of Alexandrov (now a cantonal town in the government of Vladimir). Thence, a month later, he

[1] Young heifer.

addressed to the capital two proclamations. In the first of these documents he recounted the illegalities of the boyar administration during his minority, and laid his Imperial ban upon clergy, boyars, officials, and secretaries alike; accusing them, collectively and individually, both of neglecting to defend the Tsar, the State, and Orthodox Christendom from their foes, and of persecuting all Christian people, and of robbing the Tsar of his rightful lands and dues—the clergy, in particular, being guilty of harbouring the guilty, and seeking to save them by pleading with the Throne on their behalf. Consequently (concluded the proclamation) the Tsar had "with great sorrow of heart" abandoned his realm, and gone to reside whither God had called him. This, I need hardly say, was only a feigned abdication of the throne, intended to test the strength of his authority among the people. At the same time he dispatched to the common folk of Moscow—*i.e.* to the merchants and the taxpaying classes generally—another proclamation, which was read aloud to them in the public square, and which merely stated that they might rest assured of his favour and goodwill. Every one stood petrified at these proceedings, and a momentary pause ensued in the life of the capital. Shops were closed, offices deserted, and voices hushed. Then, in a panic of terror, the city broke forth into lamentations, and besought the Metropolitan, the bishops, and certain of the boyars to go to Alexandrov, and to beg of the Tsar not to abandon his realm. Likewise the common people cried out that, so long as he would return to the throne, to defend them from thieves and brigands, they would of themselves hunt out and exterminate all intriguers and traitors to the State.

Accordingly a deputation set forth, composed of some of the higher clergy, boyars, and secretaries of State, and headed by Pimen, Archbishop of Novgorod. With it also went a number of merchants and other citizens—all of them prepared to fall down before their master, and to beseech of him to return and rule them as he listed, and to the fullest extent of his will. The Tsar duly received the deputation, and agreed to resume the throne—"to take unto him his State anew"; but only on conditions which he would expound to his petitioners later. Shortly afterwards (*i.e.* in February, 1565) he made a triumphal return progress to the capital, and at once summoned some of the boyars and the higher clergy to a Council of State. At that Council his person was seen to

be hardly recognisable. His small, grey, piercing eyes had grown dull, his hitherto animated, kindly face had fallen in and now bore a misanthropic expression, and only a few stray remnants remained of his once abundant hair and beard. It was evident that he had spent the two months of his absence in some very extraordinary state of mind—probably in a state of perplexity as to how his escapade was going to end! To the members of the Council he propounded the conditions on which he was prepared to resume the authority which he had so lately cast aside. Those conditions were (1) that, in future, he should be free to banish from court all who should prove disloyal or disobedient to himself, and (2) that he should be free forthwith to execute certain specified persons, and to sequestrate their property for the benefit of his exchequer. In all these and similar proceedings the clergy, the boyars, and officials of State were to leave everything in his hands, and to seek in no way to interfere. Thus the Council was practically requested to acquiesce in his exercise of a police dictatorship—a most astounding compact for a ruler to ask of his people!

To deal with disloyal or disobedient persons Ivan now proposed to institute what was known as the *Oprichnina*—an institution which, forming a separate court, selected by the Tsar himself, was to possess its own boyars, retainers, treasurers, constables, clerks, scriveners, servants, and members of a court *entourage* generally. As a beginning, he chose a thousand picked men, and assigned them certain special streets and wards in the quarter of Moscow then known as the White City; while the former inhabitants of that quarter (mostly minor officials in the public service) were summarily evicted from their homes, and distributed among other wards of the capital. For the maintenance of this new court, as well as of his two sons (Ivan and Feodor) and of his personal household, he also set aside some twenty towns and town-districts, together with a few detached *volosti*, and, assigning them to his *oprichniki*, evicted the old tenants from their *otchini* and homesteads, and allotted them holdings in districts other than those reserved for the *Oprichnina*. As many as 12,000 of such dispossessed occupiers and their families were compelled to leave their homes in the dead of winter, and to travel long distances on foot to the new (and, in many cases, wholly undeveloped) holdings now assigned them. Nevertheless the portion of the State thus set aside

for the *Oprichnina* did not constitute a province to itself, a compact area of territory, but was made up of a number of *volosti*, towns, portions of towns, and villages which, though scattered far and wide over the country, were mostly situated in the northern and central districts. Of these towns, portions of towns, and the rest may be named Viazma, Kozelsk, Suzdal, Galitch, Vologda, Staraia Rusa, Kargopol, and (subsequently) the *Torgovaia Storona* of Novgorod.[1] The remainder of the State, with its local military and judicial institutions, was then made over, for administrative purposes, to certain boyars known as *zemskïe boyaré* or *provincial* boyars; and from that time forth this half of the State was known as the *Zemstchina*, or provincial portion of the Empire. Those central administrative departments or *prikazi* which remained intact in the *Zemstchina* operated as before, yet referred all the more important provincial matters to the Council of Provincial Boyars which superintended the administration of the *Zemstchina*, and reported to the Tsar direct only on supremely important questions of State, or on military matters. Thus the State was divided into two halves—a *Zemstchina* and an *Oprichnina;* at the head of which stood, in the former case, the Council of Provincial Boyars, and, in the latter, the Tsar acting independently. At the same time, he reserved to himself the *supreme* direction of the Council of Provincial Boyars, and, in this connection, we read that, "for his journeyings" (*i.e.* for his travelling expenses to and from the capital), he yearly mulcted the *Zemstchina* to the tune of 100,000 roubles (5,000,000 roubles of modern money), on the ground that this sum constituted a contribution towards the cost of administration of the *Zemstchina's* affairs.

Authority for these proceedings was embodied in an "*Ukaz* for the Institution of an *Oprichnina*" which has not come down to us in the original, but which is to be found set forth at length in another manuscript of the period. Probably this *ukaz* was composed at Alexandrov, and read for the first time at the Council of State which was held immediately after Ivan's return from that retreat. At all events, he lost no time in getting to work on the strength of it. The very day after the holding of the Council he availed himself of his new powers, not only to lay all traitors under a court ban, but also to execute out of hand certain persons who had been Prince Kurbski's

[1] See vol. i, chap. xix.

principal adherents. On that day six of the upper grade of boyars were beheaded, and a seventh impaled.

Next, the *organisation* of the *Oprichnina* was taken in hand. First of all, the Tsar, as chief *Oprichnik*, hastened to emancipate himself from the formal, ceremonious side of court life which had been instituted by his father and grandfather before him. Taking leave of his ancestral palace in the Kremlin, he removed to a fortified lodge which he had built for himself in the *Oprichnina* quarter of the city, and at the same time ordered the boyars and court servitors of his new institution to erect a new palace at Alexandrov, and to add thereto a range of offices for the various departments by which the *Oprichnina* was to be administered. It was not long before he was installed in his new residence, and from that time forth he visited Moscow "for no great seasons"—*i.e.* on flying visits only. Thus the dense forests around Alexandrov saw arise in their midst both a new Imperial palace and the headquarters of the *Oprichnina*—a secluded lair which not only had a rampart and a moat round it, but also was rendered additionally secure by the erection of barricades on every avenue of approach. Likewise the Tsar instituted there a wild parody of a monastery. Selecting three hundred of his most devoted *oprichniki* to form a "brotherhood," and himself assuming the title of "Abbot" (while he invested Prince Athanasius Viazemski with the office of "cellarer"), Ivan clothed these State brigands of his in black cassocks and monastic skull-caps, awarded them a "charter of association" composed by himself, scaled the belfry each morning, with his sons, to ring for Mass, read the offices in church, sang in the choir, and made such profound obeisances to the altar that his forehead was always covered with bruises. Then, when Mass was over and the uproarious "brotherhood" were feasting and drinking in the refectory, the Tsar would improve the occasion by reading excerpts from the Fathers on the subjects of fasting and continence; after which he would dine alone, and follow that up by delivering a discourse on law, by going to sleep, or by repairing to the torture-chamber to be present at the "trial" of suspects.

At the first glance—and more especially in view of the Tsar's mode of life—the *Oprichnina* would seem to have been an institution devoid of all political significance, since, though Ivan informed the boyars, in his proclamation from Alexandrov, that they were one and all of

them "traitors and robbers of the land," he had no scruples whatever about abandoning the administration of that land to the very "traitors and robbers" whom he had denounced. Nevertheless the *Oprichnina* had a political significance, and that a very sinister one. In this institution we must distinguish carefully between *territory* and *purpose*. The term *Oprichnina* was already an antiquated one, and had been re-translated by the Muscovite literature of the day into "*Osobni Dvor*" or "Separate Court." Consequently, it was not a designation *invented* by Ivan, but only one that he had borrowed from ancient appanage terminology, since, in appanage days, it had been applied to certain districts separated off from the rest—more especially to districts granted to princes' widows in perpetuity (as distinguished from *prozhitki* or districts allotted them only for their lifetime). Ivan's *Oprichnina*,[1] on the other hand, was a *court-industrial-administrative institution*, designed (as regarded in its territorial sense) for the management of lands set apart for the upkeep of the Imperial court. A similar institution arose in Russia at about the close of the eighteenth century, when (under a law of April 5th, 1797, relating to the Imperial Family) the Emperor Paul set aside "from among the possessions of the State" certain "immoveable properties" (estates) which, comprising within their limits some 460,000 male peasants, had hitherto figured in the State Register as "court districts and villages," but which henceforth were to be known as "*cantonal* districts and villages." The principal difference between these "properties" of Paul's and the *Oprichnina*[1] was that, whereas the latter, with its subsequent additions, came to embrace nearly half the State, the "cantonal properties" of the Emperor Paul never included more than a bare thirty-eighth portion of the Russian population of his day. Ivan looked upon the *Oprichnina* as his private property—as a separate court and appanage which he had cut out of the main body of the State. Accordingly, though he bequeathed the *Zemstchina* to his *eldest* son, as future Tsar, he devised the *Oprichnina*, as a mere appanage, to his *younger* son. An item exists that at first he placed a converted Tartar, the Khan Ediger Simeon (taken prisoner at the assault of Kazan), at the head of the *Zemstchina*. At all events, at a subsequent period (*i.e.* in 1574) he went through a form of coronation of another Tartar, Sain Bulat of Kasimov (rechristened

[1] In its territorial sense.

Simeon Bekbulatovitch), and conferred upon him the full title of "Tsar and Great Prince of All Rus." Yet, if we translate these titles into modern Russian values, they probably amount to no more than that Ivan appointed the two Simeons presidents of the Council of Provincial Boyars. However, Simeon Bekbulatovitch administered the Empire for two years, and then was banished to Tver. During that period he signed State documents as though he were actual "Tsar of All Rus," while Ivan contented himself with the more modest title of "Lord and Prince" (not "*Great* Prince," be it noted, nor yet "Prince *of All Rus*," but "Prince" *of Moscow*). Whenever he visited Simeon he would make obeisance to him as a plain boyar, and introduce himself merely as "Ivanetz Vassilievitch, *Prince of Moscow*, who have come hither, with these my sons, to do thee homage." Yet this cannot have been solely political masquerading. Rather is it probable that Ivan drew a distinction between himself as Appanage, or *Oprichnina*, Prince of Moscow, and himself as that "Tsar of All Rus" who stood at the head of the *Zemstchina;* so that, when figuring in the former character, he looked upon the remainder of the Russian land as exclusively the domain of the Council which he had formed of those descendants of the former rulers of the land (the old Suzerain and appanage princes of Rus) who now constituted the upper grade of Muscovite boyars. Of course I refer to the Council of Provincial Boyars, or Council of the *Zemstchina.* In later days he renamed the *Oprichnina* simply the *Dvor* or Court, and its boyars and officials simply *dvorovïe liudi* or "court men," while he also constituted a special *Oprichnina* council of his own, and entrusted the administration of justice in the territories of his new institution to special tribunals homogeneous with the old ones which he had relegated to the *Zemstchina.* General matters of State—what I might call Imperial affairs—were debated, in the first instance, by the Council of the *Zemstchina*, and then referred for the Tsar's final decision, while all other matters were delegated to the boyars of the *Zemstchina* and *Oprichnina* in joint session, for their collective consideration and execution.

Yet (it might be asked) why was this reconstruction, this parody, of an appanage necessary? The answer is, that this institution of archaic title and obsolete form was charged with a function hitherto unknown—namely, the function of forming a political sanctuary whither

the Tsar might take refuge from his rebellious boyars. The idea that he might some day have to do so gradually permeated his soul, and became his never-ceasing obsession. In his will (executed about 1572) he draws (in all sincerity) a picture of himself as an exile and a wanderer. "Through the multitude of my sins hath the wrath of God descended upon me, so that the boyars, of their conceit, have driven me from my possessions, and I wander through all lands." It has been supposed that at this time he even thought of taking refuge in England.

Thus the *Oprichnina* was also an institution designed to safeguard the security of the Tsar. That is to say, it had assigned to it a political function for which no special machinery existed in the State organisation of Moscow—namely, the function of stamping out the sedition which was rife throughout the Russian land, more particularly among boyar circles. In reality, therefore, the institution was a superior police force for dealing with State treason, while the originally enrolled body of a thousand men (afterwards augmented to six thousand) formed what we should call a corps of secret service detectives. At their head stood Maliuta Skuratov, a relative of the Metropolitan Alexis, while clergy, boyars, and the country at large alike were forced to acknowledge the Tsar as absolute dictator in all cases where the struggle against this crime of treason was concerned. As a special police body, therefore, the *Oprichnina* was clothed in a special uniform—black, with black horses and trappings; while every *oprichnik* also carried on his saddlebow a dog's head and a broom, to signify that it was his function both to worry the Tsar's enemies and to sweep treason from off the face of the land. All this led to the corps becoming known as "The Blackness of Hell," and to its being customarily described as "dark as the night." In its own fashion it was an order of devotees who had renounced, and were at war with, their native country in much the same way that monks renounce and are at war with the temptations of the world. Nevertheless, entry to their ranks was attended with the ritual, not of monasticism, but of conspiracy. Prince Kurbski, in his "History," writes that the Tsar "hath gathered unto himself, from all the Russian land, men vile and filled with every sort of cruelty," and that he has bound them by strange oaths to forswear association, not only with friends and brethren, but even with parents, and to serve only the Tsar, "who

hath compelled them thereto by a kissing of the cross." In this connection we may usefully recall what has been said concerning the pseudo-monastic order of life which he imposed upon his "brotherhood" at Alexandrov.

Such was the origin and the purpose of the *Oprichnina*. Yet, though we can explain that origin and that purpose, we find it a more difficult matter to understand the *political significance* of the institution. That is to say, although we find it easy to see *how* and *why* the institution arose, we find it far from easy to define the exact manner in which the idea of such a scheme came to occur to the Tsar. In any case the *Oprichnina* furnished no answer to the political question at issue, seeing that it failed to remove the very difficulty which had called it into being. That difficulty originated in the collisions between Tsar and boyars—collisions the source of which was not so much a number of mutually contradictory aspirations on the part of the two chief forces in the State as a single contradiction contained in the political structure of the Muscovite Empire. Tsar and boyars did not become set in mutual and irreconcilable hostility over political ideals or plans for a new State order, but over a single irregularity in the existing State order which they did not know how to remove. As a matter of fact, what was the Muscovite State of the sixteenth century? It was an absolute monarchy, tempered by an aristocratic administrative *personnel*. No political legislature yet existed to define the limits of the supreme power, but only a ruling class possessed of an organisation which was recognised by the supreme power itself. The supreme power had developed equally, simultaneously, and hand in hand with the very political force which now restricted it, and consequently its character failed to correspond to the nature of the political instruments which it was forced to use. While the Sovereign, true to the antiquated views of the old appanage proprietor, adhered to ancient Russian usage by dubbing his boyars, not court servitors, but "Imperial slaves," the "slaves" in question looked upon themselves as administrative councillors of the Tsar of All Rus. Thus the two sides were placed in an unnatural relation to one another which, apparently, they never remarked until it had become an accomplished fact, and which they did not know how to deal with even when it was so remarked. Both sides realised that they were in an awkward position, yet could not think how to escape from it. The boyars were incap-

able of organising either themselves or a State system without the Imperial power to which they had always been accustomed, while the Tsar, for his part, was ignorant of how to govern his dominions, as now delimited, without the help of his boyars. Neither side could live on amicable terms with the other, nor yet dispense with the other. Powerless, therefore, to agree or to part, they decided to try *separation—i.e.* parallel, but not joint, life: and it was to accomplish this end that the *Oprichnina* was formed.

Nevertheless, it was an expedient which did not remove the main difficulty itself. That difficulty lay in the obstacle encountered by the Tsar in the political position of the boyars as a ruling class—a position which hampered his authority. From this there were two ways of escape. One was to dislodge the boyars from their vantage-ground as a ruling class, and to replace them with classes more likely to constitute pliant and subservient instruments of administration; the other was to introduce disunion among their ranks by stationing a given number of their more trustworthy members near the throne, and ruling with their help even as Ivan himself had ruled at the beginning of his reign. Yet the first of those two expedients would have taken the Tsar a long time to accomplish, while the second one he either could not or would not attempt. In conversation with foreign visitors he frequently expressed his intention of one day changing the whole administration of the country, and even of exterminating the nobility; yet (as already seen) his ideas of administrative reform never got beyond dividing the State into a *Zemstchina* and an *Oprichnina*. Consequently wholesale extermination of the boyars always remained a futile dream of his disordered imagination. As a matter of fact, it would have been a difficult task to weed out and destroy a class which was linked by so many practical ties with the inferior social *strata* which it overlaid. Similarly, it would have been a long while before the Tsar could have created an administrative order to replace the boyars. Such changes require time and practice, for a new ruling class has to grow accustomed to its authority, and a community to grow accustomed to its new ruling class. Nevertheless, Ivan undoubtedly meditated such a change, and saw in his *Oprichnina* the first step towards it. Also, it is possible that he had cherished the idea of boyar replacement ever since the boyar misrule of his youth; and certainly it was some such notion which led him to take Adashev "out of the mire"

(as Ivan himself expressed it), in the hope of obtaining faithful service from him, and to set him among the nobles as his familiar. Adashev, therefore, was the forerunner of the *oprichnik*. With the actual *form* of the ideas which guided him in his organisation of the *Oprichnina* Ivan had become acquainted at a very early period in his reign. In 1537, or thereabouts, there arrived in Moscow a Lithuanian named Ivan Peresvietov, who looked upon himself as a descendant of the well-known hero-monk, Peresviet, who fell on the field of Kulikovo Polé.[1] He was a soldier of fortune who, in the ranks of a Polish mercenary force, had served three kings in succession—namely, the rulers of Poland, Hungary, and Bohemia—but in Moscow he encountered ill-treatment at the hands of the nobles, and, having lost the whole of the fortune which he had amassed in military service, presented (in 1548 or 1549) a petition on the subject to the Tsar. This document constitutes a bitter political pamphlet against the boyars, as compared with the military-official burgher class to which the petitioner himself belonged. The author begins by warning Ivan against wiles on the part of intimates from whom (so he avers) the Tsar cannot bear to be parted "even for an hour," and tells him that no ruler in the world can continue to exist unless God preserve him from "snares of his nobles." Ivan's own nobles (continues the petitioner) are but sorry fellows, since they kiss the cross and then conceive treason, while the Tsar is forever introducing internecine war into his realms by appointing men of that stamp governors of towns and provinces, where they grow rich and slothful on Christian blood and tears. Any man whom the Tsar consulted because of his birth alone, and not also because of military service or some other token of ability, was a sorcerer and a heretic, and would assuredly end by depriving the Tsar of his happiness and wisdom. Therefore such a man ought to be burnt. The author also expresses the opinion that the best possible order for a State is such an order as is maintained by the Sultan Machmet, who exalts an administrator at his good pleasure, and then, if need be, "thrusteth him headlong again," with the damning words: "This I do because thou art not able to live in good report, and to serve thy lord faithfully." A Tsar (the petitioner adds) should visit the whole of his realm in person when collecting sums due to his treasury, and from that treasury should cheer the hearts

[1] Where, in 1380, Dmitri, son of Ivan II., defeated the Khan Mamai.

of his warriors, and invite them to be intimate with him, as persons worthy of trust in all things. Thus the petition seems to have been written largely in commendation of such an institution as the *Oprichnina*, since its ideas were all in favour of "the mean-born *kromieshniki*"[1] as against the boyar aristocracy. That the Tsar himself must have sympathised with the general tenour of Peresvietov's sentiments is shown by the fact that in later days we find him writing to Vassuka Griazni, one of his *oprichniki*: "For our sins it hath hitherto been hidden from us that we ought to set aside the boyars of our father and of ourselves, and to call you, the workers of the *Oprichnina*, to be near us, in the hope that ye may render us faithful service and truth." These "workers" of the *Oprichnina*, or men of the burgher rank, were destined later to figure as those "Children of Abraham" to whom Ivan refers in his correspondence with Kurbski.[2] In short, the Tsar considered that the burgher class, as represented by the *Oprichnina*, ought to replace the boyars as the ruling class, and presently we shall see that by the close of the seventeenth century such a change had become a *fait accomplis*, though in a different and less sinister form.

However, no matter what means of escaping the difficulty Ivan had chosen, it was the political position of *an entire class*, and not the political position of *individual members of a class*, that he ought to have assailed. Yet he did the precise opposite. Though suspecting the boyars in general of treason, he hurled himself only upon isolated suspects, and, weeding them out, one by one, left the class as a whole in possession of the direction of the *Zemstchina*. Finding himself powerless to dislodge the whole administrative *stratum* which he detested, he had recourse to extermination of such detached fractions of it as he most suspected or disliked. Thus we see that the *oprichniki* were designed to hold in check, rather than to replace, the boyars—a function which made them, not the administrators, but the police constables of the land. In this lay the political fatuity of the *Oprichnina*. Though called into being by a struggle which owed its origin to a *system*, and not to persons, the institution was directed against persons, and not against the system. In this sense, above all others, the *Oprichnina* may truly be said to have furnished no answer to the political question at issue. The idea of it must first

[1] In modern colloquial English "outsiders." [2] See p. 72.

have occurred to the Tsar through an incorrect appreciation both of the boyars' position and of his own. That is to say, the idea must have been, to a large extent, the fruit of his nervous imagination. Yet, though we see him aiming the institution at the sedition which he conceived to be rife among the boyars, and to be threatening the entire Imperial Family with extinction, can it be said that any such danger really existed? To begin with, the political strength of the boyars, as compared with that of the *Oprichnina*, was already undermined by conditions arising directly or indirectly out of the absorption of Rus by Moscow. The privilege of permitted, legal mobility which, up to Ivan's day, had been the mainstay of the boyar's freedom of service had quite disappeared. Nor, for that matter, had the boyar any place to resort to now but Moscow (unless it were Lithuania), seeing that the last remaining appanage prince—Vladimir of Staritz—was under treaty not to harbour any prince, boyar, or other person who should seek to desert the Tsar's service for his own. Thus, from a free engagement, boyar service had become an obligatory, involuntary bond, while at the same time the boyar class was deprived of all power of concerted, joint action by the working of the *miestnichestvo*. Likewise, the territorial reshuffling of the leading princes in the Muscovite service which, both in the time of Ivan III. and in that of his grandson, had been the result of old-established princely *otchini* becoming exchanged for newly-acquired estates had removed such rulers as the Princes of Odoiev, Vorotin, and Mezetsk from points where they might have entered into dangerous relations with the external foes of Moscow to points on the Kliazma and the Upper Volga where they were henceforth domiciled on unfamiliar soil to which they were bound by no long-standing ties. True, some of them still administered provinces, but only in such a way as to earn for them the hatred of the population. In short, the boyar class had no sure ground for its feet, whether in the administration, or among the people, or even in its own organisation as a class: and this fact Ivan probably knew as well as, or even better than, the boyars themselves. Yet grave peril would have threatened had the circumstances of 1553 been repeated. We have seen that, on that occasion, the Tsar was seized with a dangerous illness, and that many of the boyars thereupon expressed reluctance to swear allegiance to his infant son, for the reason that secretly they meditated elevating the Appanage Prince Vladimir, uncle of the Tsar-

evitch, to the throne. On that occasion, also, the ailing Tsar did not hesitate to tell such of the loyal boyars as took the oath that he could clearly foresee the fate of his family if he himself died and the pretender ascended the throne. Indeed, that fate would have been the fate which has nearly always overtaken prince-claimants under Eastern despotisms; the fate which was meted out by Ivan's own forefathers, the Suzerain Princes of Moscow, to all who of their relatives chanced to stand in their way; the fate with which Ivan himself, later, was to visit his cousin Vladimir of Staritz. Although the peril of 1553 never again occurred, not only did the *Oprichnina* constitute no protection against such an eventuality, but, if anything, it tended to bring that very eventuality about. A dynastic catastrophe was only averted in that year by the fact that a considerable number of the boyars rallied to the Tsarevitch's side; whereas, if the Tsar had died in 1568, the direct heir would have found few adherents among the boyar order, seeing that by that time the formation of the *Oprichnina* had caused it to close its ranks in deference to the instinct of self-preservation.

Inasmuch, therefore, as the eventuality of 1553 never recurred, boyar disaffection never exceeded ideas, and isolated attempts at desertion to Lithuania. Contemporary writers make no mention of conspiracies by the ruling class, nor even of any experiments in that direction. Yet, if boyar treason actually did exist, the Tsar certainly adopted a wrong line in dealing with it. It was his cue to have directed his blows exclusively at the boyar class as a whole, not at individual members of it—still less at persons not belonging to it at all. Kurbski's "History" estimates the number of victims of Ivan's cruelty at 400 only, but foreign observers of the day consider it to have reached 10,000. Every time that a batch of executions was carried out, Ivan's sanctimonious disposition led him to cause the names of the deceased to be entered in obituary lists, which he afterwards sent round to the different monasteries, with a request that the souls of the departed should be commemorated, and an accompanying donation to defray the cost of the necessary masses. In some such lists the number of names actually exceeds 4000! These martyrologies form the more curious reading in that comparatively few boyar names occur in their pages — the names of those entered being chiefly names of court attendants, clerks, huntsmen,

monks, nuns, and the like ("departed Christians of man's, woman's, and infant's estate, whose names do Thou, O Lord, consider," is the mournful *formula* appended to each group of these murdered *misérables*) who had never been in any way connected with boyar treason. At last the turn of "The Blackness of Hell" itself came, and the Tsar's three chief intimates in the *Oprichnina*—Prince Viazemski and the Princes Bazmanov, father and son—laid down their lives. It is in a tone of profound dejection, as well as of barely restrained anger, that writers of the day speak of the effect which the *Oprichnina* produced upon minds unaccustomed to such internal alarms. Describing the institution as the embodiment of social discord, they write that the Tsar "doth continually stir up murderous strife"; that he "doth call certain folk whom he hath bound to his person *oprichniki*, and others but *zemskïe*"; that he "doth send the men of one town against the men of another town"; and, finally, that he "doth many a time bid his own portion of the State ravish the other portion, and spoil its houses, and deliver it over unto death." "Thus," they conclude, "the Tsar hath raised up against himself sore anger and lamentation in all the world, by reason of the many blood-sheddings and executions which he hath commanded." One such observer, in particular, seems to have believed the *Oprichnina* to be a sort of *political game* played by the Tsar. "All the State hath he sundered in twain, as it were with an axe, and thereby hath he disturbed all men. He playeth with God's people, and staketh against himself all such as do conspire." The fact is that the Tsar wished to be *Emperor* in the *Zemstchina*, but *Appanage Prince* only in the *Oprichnina*,[1] and that this dual political personality lay beyond the comprehension of contemporary chroniclers. They merely knew that, in removing treason, the *Oprichnina* introduced anarchy, and that, while safeguarding the Tsar, the institution shook the State to its foundations, and thereby paved the way for *real* treason in place of the imaginary variety at which the *Oprichnina* purported to be aimed. The observer whose words I have just quoted also thought that he could discern a direct connection beween the Period of Troubles—the period at which he was writing—and the *Oprichnina* which he could dimly remember. "In those days the Tsar did cause a great sundering of the State: and this division, methinks, was the forerunner of all the dissensions by which the land is vexéd to this day." There can be

[1] Both these terms are, of course, used here in their *territorial* sense.

little doubt, therefore, that Ivan's extraordinary form of policy was the outcome, not of political considerations at all, but of faulty political comprehension. Once he had fallen out with his boyars, his confidence in them became further lessened after his illness in 1553: until, when upon that there followed the added shock of Prince Kurbski's desertion, the Tsar, exaggerating the danger, became panic-stricken, and "began to be for himself alone." For him the question of this or the other State order became solely a question of his personal safety; so that, like a man terrified beyond the power of self-control, he shut his eyes blindly, and struck out to right and left, without making any discrimination between friend and foe. Hence it follows that for the direction which he imparted to the political struggle his personal character was largely responsible: which fact has communicated to his character an importance in our history which it is impossible for us to overlook.

CHAPTER VI

CHARACTER SKETCH OF IVAN IV.

IVAN IV. was born in 1530. Though gifted by nature with a subtle and vigorous intellect—an intellect at once introspective, slightly sardonic, and wholly typical of Great Rus and Moscow—the circumstances amid which his childhood was passed soon corrupted his mental powers, and communicated to them a morbid and unnatural bent. Early left an orphan (for his father died when he was but four years old, and his mother four years later), he found himself a child surrounded by strangers: with the result that there entered into his soul, and remained with him all his life, that feeling of loneliness, abandonment, and isolation which led him constantly to assert that "my parents never had a care for me." Hence the timidity which became a fundamental *trait* in his character. Like all children reared among strangers and deprived of a father's guidance and a mother's love, Ivan soon acquired the habit of listening and watching as he went; which bred in him a caution that, as the years progressed, developed into a profound distrust of his fellow-man. Frequently in childhood he was treated with contempt and indifference by those around him, and in after days we find him recalling (in one of his letters to Kurbski) how strictly he and his younger brother Yuri were kept when children—how that they were clothed and fed like paupers, never allowed to have their own way in anything, and, for all their tender years, forced always to act under compulsion. True, on ceremonial or festive occasions (such as the reception or leave-taking of ambassadors) Ivan was surrounded with Imperial pomp, and treated with fawning servility; but on other days things were altogether different, and no trace of ceremony attended the way in which he was alternately coaxed and coerced. His own pen has given us a picture of an occasion when he and his little brother were playing in their dead father's bedchamber, while, lolling on a couch beside

them, was seated Prince Shuiski, the *doyen* of the palace boyars —his elbow propped against the Imperial bed, and his feet actually resting where the dead Tsar had so lately reposed! The bitterness with which, a quarter of a century later, Ivan recalls the scene enables us to realise how often and how deeply he must have been wounded in his youth. Though flattered as the young Tsar, he was scorned as a mere minor. Yet the very surroundings wherein his early days were passed debarred him from always giving full rein to his indignation or laying bare his heart: and this need for constantly holding himself in check, for suppressing his wrath, and for swallowing his tears gradually bred in him a kind of mute, subterranean rage against his fellows—the rage of compressed lips. Also, he sustained a terrible shock in his infancy. This was in 1542, when some of the adherents of Prince Ivan Shuiski made a midnight raid upon the palace of the Metropolitan Josephus (a partisan of the rival faction of the Princes Bielski), and, finding the prelate fled for refuge to the Imperial palace, first of all broke the windows of his residence, and then pursued him to the Kremlin itself; where, bursting into the young monarch's chamber just as dawn was breaking, they awoke him suddenly from his sleep, and frightened him almost to death.

These scenes of boyar arrogance and violence amid which Ivan was reared constituted his earliest political impressions, and caused his natural timidity so to exaggerate danger as to be prone to relapse into what we call wide-eyed terror. Constantly fearful and suspicious, he would imagine himself wholly surrounded by enemies: with the result that early he acquired the habit of thinking that he must never relax his guard, lest a net be spread around him, and he be caught unawares in its toils. In short, his strongest motive was the instinct of self-preservation, and every faculty of his vigorous intellect went to strengthen that rudimentary impulse.

Like most boys who are forced to enter the struggle for existence at an early age, Ivan grew swiftly, and in advance of his years. Even before he had reached the age of twenty he had begun to astonish those around him with the abundance of his matured impressions and carefully thought-out ideas—ideas of which his forefathers were wholly incapable, even after they had attained to man's estate. On one occasion (so we read in an old chronicle of the day) the sixteen-year-old boy suddenly desisted from playing at some youthful game or another,

and fell to haranguing his attendants on the subject of his eventual marriage! This, too, he did so sensibly, and with such far-sighted political acumen, that his hearers burst into tears of emotion at the thought that a Tsar so young should yet possess so great a store of knowledge, even though hitherto he had led a retired life, and persistently avoided all companionship. This early habit of solitary, restless meditation gradually warped the young Tsar's mind, and led to his developing a kind of morbid sensitiveness and excitability which eventually deprived him of the balance of his mental faculties—deprived him of the power of so controlling them that they should share their work equally, and avoid hindering one another's action. In other words, he grew powerless to exclude hysteria from the province of reason. Whenever he could not understand a given matter or subject he would fall to stimulating and goading his brain with the spur of emotion, until, with the aid of such forced self-inspiration, he not infrequently succeeded in firing his mind to bold and lofty schemes, and inflating his diction to the point of burning eloquence. At such moments the keenest witticisms, the most caustic sarcasms, the most apposite similes, the most unexpected turns of thought would fly from his tongue or his pen like sparks from a blacksmith's hammer. The mere fact that he had the most ungovernable temper in Moscow made him one of the finest orators and writers of his day. His works—composed, as all of them were, under the stress of passion—may be said to *infect* the mind of the reader rather than to *convince* him, while they almost overwhelm the senses with the forcefulness of their language, the subtlety of their reasoning, the ingenuity of their arguments, and the brilliancy of their ideas. Yet it was only a phosphorescent brilliancy—a brilliancy which diffused no actual warmth. His inspiration was not *true* inspiration, but headstrong violence added to nervous agility of mind, the result of an artificial stimulus. As we read his famous correspondence with Kurbski we stand amazed at the rapidity with which the author's moods follow one another in these letters. Interludes of compunction and magnanimity, as well as occasional flashes of genuine sincerity, alternate with rude jests, bitter raillery, and the expression of a sort of cold contempt for mankind. Yet such moments of real feeling or strenuous intellectual effort not infrequently give place to an utter collapse of mental

vigour, until of all the keen play of wit which has gone before not a shred of sane thought remains. When sunk in such an intellectual swoon, such a fit of moral abasement, Ivan was capable of the wildest vagaries, since it is a common occurrence for men who are easily fired to excitement to be as readily impelled to some artificial restorative when the hysterical fit has passed—and Ivan seems to have been no stranger to the stimulus of *liquor* during the period of his *Oprichnina*. This moral instability, this alternation of lofty mental flights with shameful moral degradation, helps to explain Ivan's policy of State. Much of what he accomplished or designed was good, wise, and even great: yet much more which he perpetrated caused him to become an object of horror and aversion alike to his own and to subsequent generations. His sacking of Novgorod on the mere suspicion of disaffection; his countless executions in Moscow; his murder, first of all of his own son, and then of the Metropolitan Philip, with his own hand; his excesses with his *oprichniki* in the capital and at Alexandrov,—as we read of these things we feel that here was a man with the soul of a wild beast.

Yet it was not so in reality. Rather was it that either nature or his upbringing had deprived him of all moral balance, and so inclined him always to take the evil course whenever he found himself confronted with even the smallest difficulty in life. At any moment he was liable to break out into some new grossness, for he was a man wholly incapable of brooking anything that displeased him. We read that, in 1577, after capturing the town of Kochenhausen in Livonia, he stood for a while in the main street, in amicable converse with the local pastor over his favourite theological subjects: yet also we read that no sooner did the unfortunate pastor commit the blunder of likening Luther to St. Paul than Ivan came within an ace of ordering the culprit's execution! Giving the worthy man a cut over the head with his riding-whip, the Tsar mounted his horse, and rode away with the words: "To the devil with thee and thy Luther!" On another occasion he sentenced to death an elephant which had been sent to him from Persia—simply because it refused to kneel in his presence! In fact, he had no innate nobility of character, and was more receptive to bad impressions than to good. That is to say, he belonged to that class of ill-grained persons who are ever more ready to fasten upon the weaknesses and failings of others than to perceive in them their better

qualities and gifts. At his first encounter with a stranger it was always the *foe* in him that he looked for. Above all things, it was difficult to win his confidence. Men of his stamp require to be constantly assured that they have no rival in their friends' esteem and affection before they will accord their affection in return. Nevertheless any person so able to reassure Ivan enjoyed his confidence almost to excess, since at such times there revealed itself in him a quality which, to such persons as he trusted, tempered much of the natural severity of his disposition. That quality was the power of self-attachment. His first wife he loved with a tender, an almost extravagant, affection. Equally unquestioning was his devotion to Silvester and Adashev, as well as, later, to Maliuta Skuratov. This combination of power of self-attachment with ingrained distrust is well illustrated in Ivan's will where he tells his sons that, though they are "to love men and to reward them," they are also "to guard themselves against them." It was this duality of character, too, which deprived his temperament of all stability. So far from causing him to reflect, the relations of life only alarmed and embittered him. Yet at moments when he was free from the external impressions which vexed him, and found himself alone with his thoughts, he became filled with that despondency of which only men are capable who have experienced many moral losses and disappointments in life. Nothing, apparently, could be more formal and unemotional than the general text of Ivan's will, with its minute dispositions of his property, moveable and immoveable, among the various heirs: yet to it we also find prefixed some high theological reflections, with the following mournful words added: "My body is grown feeble, and my soul sick: yet for the wounds of my soul and of my body is there no physician who can make me whole. In vain I have looked for some man to have pity upon me, but have found no one. Yea, no comforter have I found, but only such as have rewarded me evil for good and hatred for love." "Poor sufferer—poor Imperial martyr!" involuntarily one might exclaim on reading these pitiful words: yet, at the very moment when he wrote them, not two years had elapsed since, without inquiry made, but on the merest breath of suspicion, the "poor martyr" in question had sacked a great and ancient city and its province[1] with such inhuman, godless cruelty as even the Tartars themselves had never been guilty of when storming a Russian town. On another occasion

[1] Novgorod the Great.

he entered the Usspenski Cathedral at a moment when a batch of executions was about to take place, and was met there by the Metropolitan Philip, come, as in duty bound, to plead with the Tsar for those condemned to die. "Silence, thou!" exclaimed Ivan, scarcely able to restrain his wrath. "But one word have I to say unto thee—and that is, *silence*, holy father, and accord me thy blessing!" "Verily," answered Philip, "shall my silence be laid upon thy soul for a sin, and shall one day bring thee to death." Yet the Tsar's only reply, as he turned away, was: "See how my friends and neighbours do rise against me, and conspire me evil!" Thus, even in his vilest moments, Ivan could always relapse into crocodile's tears and affected self-pity.

Taken alone, these qualities of Ivan's might have served as interesting material for psychology (or, as some might prefer to say, for psychiatry), inasmuch as it is easy to mistake moral looseness of character—especially when viewed from a far historical distance—for mental disease, and on that supposition to acquit the memory of the supposed sufferer of all historical responsibility. Unfortunately there remains a circumstance which invests Ivan's qualities with a significance far graver than usually pertains to such psychological curiosities as manifest themselves from time to time in human life—even in human life so rich in every kind of mental abnormality as that of Russia has been: and that circumstance is—that Ivan was *Tsar*, and that, consequently, his personal qualities imparted to his political ideas a peculiar bent which caused those ideas to exercise a strong and baneful influence upon his political *action*.

It was at a very early age that Ivan first began to think his restless thoughts concerning himself as "Emperor of Moscow and of All Rus." Indeed, he began to do so sooner, and to a greater degree, than was good for him, while the scandals of boyar administration in his youthful days not only served to keep those thoughts constantly in his mind, but also to communicate to them a poignantly hysterical character. In those days Ivan suffered many annoyances and insults from the nobles, who would arrest, and threaten with death, persons to whom he was sincerely attached, yet answer his boyish tears and prayers for mercy with expressions of open disrespect both for the living ruler and for the dead father. Nevertheless they never failed to recognise Ivan as the lawful Tsar. Never once did he hear from any quarter a hint that his

Imperial right was open to question or dispute. Without exception his *entourage* addressed him as "Great Tsar," and in moments of vexation or terror he could always fall back upon the thought of his Imperial dignity as a means of political self-defence. He seems to have been taught his letters in much the same way that his forefathers had been—in the way, indeed, that letters were always taught in Rus at that period: namely, by being made to recite newly-learnt passages from the Breviary and Psalter, and to repeat, over and over again, passages already studied—extracts from the two works in question being reiterated by the pupil in mechanical fashion until they had become graven on his memory for life. Before long Ivan's boyish intellect seems to have begun to probe beneath the mechanical acquisition of these volumes. In perusing their pages, he was bound to meet with many passages relating to rulers and kingdoms, to "God's Anointed," to false councillors, to the blessed state of the man who entered not into their conversation, and so forth. Consequently, from the moment when he first began to comprehend his orphaned position, and to consider his relation to his *entourage*, such passages could not fail to arrest his attention. Understanding these Biblical aphorisms in his own way, and applying them to himself and his own peculiar position, they would furnish him with just the answers which he needed to the questions suggested by the difficulties of life, as well as prompt a moral justification for the feeling of bitterness which those difficulties always aroused in him. It is easy, then, to understand that he would make swift progress in the study of Holy Writ when to his *exegesis* he could apply such a sensitive, such a subjective, method—when to his perusals of and ponderings over the Word of God he could add the influence of such angry, captious feelings. From that time forth books became his favourite pursuit. From the Psalms he passed to other portions of the Bible, as well as read much that would be accessible to him in the stock of literature then current among the reading public of Rus. For a Muscovite of the sixteenth century he was well-read, and his contemporaries had some reason for describing him as a "rhetorician of lettered cunning." Above all things he loved to argue on theological subjects, especially after dining, and possessed (to quote an old manuscript) "an especial shrewdness and remembrance of God's Writ." Once (in 1570) he arranged a solemn debate in his palace, with, for subject, rival faiths, for his antagonist the Bohemian evangelist Rokita

(chaplain of the Polish Embassy), and for his audience some of the foreign ambassadors, boyars, and higher clergy. First of all he addressed to Rokita a lengthy speech, in which he expounded some leading points contradictory of the Protestant theologian's teaching; after which he invited his opponent to defend his case "with boldness and freedom." Lastly, having listened to Rokita's answering speech with patience and attention, he concluded the debate by writing out, for Rokita's benefit, a refutation of the latter's arguments. That refutation has come down to our own day. In it we find many passages remarkable for their brilliancy of intellect and imagery; and though it is not invariably the case that its course of thought follows a direct logical sequence (indeed, when touching upon some difficult point, it not infrequently grows devious and obscure), there still remain numerous instances of great dialectical subtlety. Moreover, though texts of Scripture are not always introduced with discrimination, they at least show us that the author was widely acquainted, not only with the Bible and the works of the Fathers, but also with translations of those Greek chronicles which at that time served the Russians as text-books on general history. What he read most of all, however, and with the closest attention, was works on esoteric subjects. At every point in their pages he would meet with, and lay to heart, thoughts and images which harmonised with his own disposition and re-echoed to his own thoughts—he would read and re-read favourite passages until they had become indelibly impressed upon his memory. Also, like certain literary scholars of our own day, he loved to chequer his writings with quotations apposite and the reverse. At every step in his first letter to Kurbski he interpolates short passages from the Bible in general and whole chapters from the Old Testament Prophets and the Epistles of St. Paul in particular. The fact that he frequently mutilates them in what seems to be an uncalled-for fashion was probably due to the circumstance that he was trusting to memory alone.

Thus at a very early age Ivan adopted a political pursuit to which his Muscovite forefathers had never aspired, whether in their youthful days, or after they had entered upon the practical tasks of their maturer years. It was a pursuit which seems to have been practised in secret, and without the knowledge of court circles—the latter, indeed, long failing to guess the direction in which the excitable bent of their young Tsar was

turned. In any case it is unlikely that they would have approved of his adopting so sedentary an occupation. Hence they were the more astounded when, in 1546, the sixteen-year-old Ivan suddenly informed them that he was contemplating marriage, but that, before entering upon that state, he wished to trace the customs of his forefathers, the old Suzerain Princes of Moscow, and of his kinsman, Vladimir Monomakh, with regard to the succession to the throne. Indeed, his very first idea, on emerging from the State tutelage of the boyars, was to assume the title of Tsar, and to be crowned to that office with a solemn Church rite. Just as his political ideas developed without the knowledge of his *entourage*, so his tutors had no hand in the forming of his complex character. At the same time, his writings enable us to estimate to a certain degree the progress of his political self-education. In almost equal proportions his letters to Kurbski constitute political treatises on the authority of a Tsar and polemical pamphlets against the boyars and their political claims. The reader who throws a cursory glance over the first interminable letter which he dispatched will be struck with the heterogeneity and lack of arrangement of its contents, as well as with the diversity of the literary material which the author must have painfully collected before scattering it with so lavish a hand over these never-ending pages. What, indeed, do they not contain in the way of names, texts, and examples cited? Long and short excerpts from Holy Writ and the Fathers of the Church; verses and whole chapters from the Old Testament Prophets—from Moses, David, Isaiah, and the rest, as well as from Church expositors of the New; passages from Saints Basil, Gregory, and John Chrysostom; types derived from classical mythology and epic literature, such as Zeus, Apollo, Antinous, Æneas, and so forth; Biblical names, such as Jesus of Nazareth, Gideon, Abimelech, and Jephtha; detached episodes from Jewish, Roman, and Byzantine history, as well as from the histories of some of the Western European nations; mediæval names, such as Genseric (whom our author calls "Zinsirich"), the Vandals, the Goths, the Sarmatians, and the Franks—names which Ivan must have read in the Greek chronicles referred to; unexpected quotations from Russian chronographical works,—all these ingredients, jumbled up together, replete with anachronisms, changing with almost kaleidoscopic frequency, and devoid of all visible sequence, we see appearing and disappearing before our eyes, according as the author's quotations and

images follow the course of his whimsical imagination, or the windings of his devious thought. Lastly we see this mess of (if I may be allowed the term) learned soup "improved" at intervals with political or theological aphorisms—all of them deeply underscored; while here and there a few touches of delicate irony or rough (though frequently well-aimed) sarcasm are thrown in, as a final pinch of salt, to complete the general concoction. "What a chaotic production! What a hotch-potch!" one might exclaim on perusing the pages of this document. Certainly Kurbski had some reason for describing as "old wives' chatter" portions of it which interlard dissertations on the subject of beds and women's clothing with texts taken from Scripture! Yet, if we scan this frothy torrent of texts, moralisings, reminiscences, and digressions a little more closely, we shall soon catch the fundamental idea which runs, like a thin thread, through all these apparently orderless pages. From boyhood upwards the favourite Biblical texts and historical examples which Ivan had learnt by heart had all of them referred to one and the same theme—namely, to the theme of a ruler's authority, of its divine origin, of different orders of State, of a monarch's relation to his councillors and subjects, and of the disastrous consequences which may ensue from divided rule or anarchy. "No authority shall there be save it be of God," "Every soul shall be subject to the ruling power," "Woe unto the city wherein many do rule,"—such were the texts and aphorisms referred to. Through perpetual study and digestion of these favourite proverbs Ivan must insensibly have come to create for himself an ideal world into which he could withdraw at intervals (as Moses retired to his mountain) for refuge from the pains and alarms of everyday life. Lovingly he would pore over the sublime figures of chosen and anointed men of God such as Moses, Saul, David, and Solomon, and strive to see in them, as in a mirror, an image of his own greatness. Undoubtedly he would see his person surrounded with such a radiance and a magnificence as his forefathers, the simple prince-landowners of Moscow, had never thought of attributing to themselves. In fact, he was the first Muscovite ruler to perceive, and clearly to apprehend, in his own person the Tsar as taken in the literal Biblical sense of the "Lord's Anointed." The idea came to him like a political revelation, and thenceforth his political *ego* figured in his eyes as an object meet for reverent worship. He became, as it were, a priest unto himself, and evolved from his inner consciousness a complete

theology of political self-deification which developed into an elaborate theory of Imperial power. Thus it was in the tone of one commissioned from on high, as well as with a note of subtle irony in his tone, that to a treaty of peace with Stephen Batory [1] he thus appended his signature: "We, the humble Johannes, *by the will of God, and not by any false dispensation of man*, Tsar and Great Prince of all Rus."

Yet these workings of Ivan's intellect and imagination never succeeded in suggesting to him anything beyond the bare outlines of the idea of Imperial authority. That is to say, they never led to any of those *deductions* which should have flowed from such an idea—to a new State order, for instance, or to a new political programme. Carried away by his ungovernable temper and imaginary fears, he put behind him the practical tasks and obligations of State life, and made no attempt to adapt his abstract ideas to the historical realities of his environment. In the absence of any practical elaboration, his high-flown theories on the subject of supreme power became mere whims of a personal autocracy, and so degenerated into nothing more than instruments of personal animosity and caprice. Thus the practical question of a new State order remained undecided. We have seen that he began his reign with a bold internal and external policy, with the aim, on the one hand, of penetrating to the shores of the Baltic and entering into independent trading and cultural relations with Western Europe, and, on the other hand, of reducing the work of legislation to a system, and of organising provincial local government through local territorial communes—units which were designed subsequently to participate both in the direction of local law and administration and in the working of the central administrative power. If the first Territorial Council of 1550 had been allowed to go further, and to enter, as a recognised organ of the State, into the composition of the governing power, it would have helped men's minds to assimilate the idea of a pan-territorial Tsar in place of the old *otchinnik* or appanage proprietor. Unfortunately the Tsar could not get on with his councillors. His suspicious and morbid views on the subject of his authority led him always to look upon honest, straightforward advice as an attempt against his supreme rights, and upon disagreement with his schemes as a sign of disaffection, treason, and conspiracy. Dismissing honest advisers, he yielded to the opinionated, one-sided bent of his political theories, and, sus-

[1] A Transylvanian general who long held the Baltic Provinces against the Russians.

pecting snares and treason everywhere, rashly raised the old question of the relation of boyars to Tsar—a question which he was not in a position to decide, and which he should therefore never have revived. The real root of the evil lay in the historically compounded contradiction which existed between the governmental position and political attitude of the boyars and the nature of the Tsar's power and political conception of himself. That difficulty the sixteenth century did not see removed. Indeed, the only way in which the problem could have been solved was by slowly and cautiously introducing a policy designed to smooth away the contradiction by which the difficulty had been evoked. Yet what Ivan tried to do was to oppose to the keen edge of that contradiction the blunt cudgel of his one-sided political theories. Adopting an exclusive and intolerant, as well as a purely abstract, view of his supreme power, he decided that he could no longer rule the State as his father and grandfather had ruled it before him—*i.e.* with the help of the boyars. Yet to formulate an alternative scheme he was powerless. Converting a political question of a system into a bitter feud with individuals—*i.e.* into an aimless and indiscriminate slaughter, he introduced ever-increasing calamity and confusion into the community by the formation of his *Oprichnina*, until finally he paved the way for the downfall of his dynasty by murdering his own son. Meanwhile the foreign enterprises and domestic reforms which he had inaugurated with such success fell into abeyance, and were laid aside in an unfinished state, through the fault of the internal troubles which he had rashly stirred up. This enables us to understand why contemporary chroniclers attributed to him a dual personality. One writer of the day appends to a description of Ivan's principal doings before the death of his first wife the words: "Yet after that time there did come upon the Tsar as it were a great and terrible tempest, which disturbed the peace of his goodly heart. In some manner which I wot not his mind, with all its plenitude of wisdom, did turn to the nature of a wild beast, and he became a traitor unto his own State." Another writer of the period says, in a character sketch of "the terrible Tsar," that he was "a man of marvellous judgment, as well as full of skill in book-learning, eloquent in speech, very bold in arms, and ever steadfast for his country; yet cruel of heart unto the servants given him of God, prone to shed blood, and of a pitiless mind. Many of the people, both young and old, did he slay

during his rule, many of his towns did he place in bondage, and much else of evil did he do unto his slaves. Yet this same Tsar did also perform much good, and loved his army exceedingly, and gave of his treasury, in abundance, for its needs."

Thus Ivan's *positive* importance in the history of Russia is by no means so great as we might have augured from his early schemes and inceptions, or as we might have deduced from the commotion caused by his later policy. In fact, Ivan the Terrible was a thinker rather than a doer—a man who acted rather upon the nerves and the imagination of his contemporaries than upon the State order of his time. Even without him, the life of the Muscovite Empire would have developed precisely as it had done before his day, and as it did after he was gone. All that can be said in that respect is that, without him, Russian development would have escaped many of the shocks and hindrances which it suffered both during and in consequence of his reign. The chief point for notice, therefore, is his *negative* importance. He was a remarkable writer, as well as, it may reasonably be conceded, a remarkable political thinker, but he was no statesman. The one-sided, self-seeking, opinionated bent of his political ideas combined with his nervous irritability to deprive him of all practical tact, political perspective, and grasp of realities: with the result that, though he made a successful beginning of the work of completing the structure of State which his forefathers had erected, he insensibly ended by shaking that structure to its foundations. Karamzin does not greatly exaggerate when he places Ivan's reign—one of the most promising at its inception—on a level with the Mongol yoke and the disastrous appanage period in regard to the final results which it produced. In short, the Tsar sacrificed both himself, his dynasty, and the welfare of his realm to his ferocity and self-will, and may be likened to that blind hero of the Old Testament who, to destroy his enemies, pulled down upon his own head the building in which those enemies were seated.

CHAPTER VII

Review of the composition of an appanage community—The composition of the new Muscovite official class—Its constituent elements, native and foreign—*Tchini* or ranks—The numerical extent of the Muscovite official class—The external position of the State—Its struggles with the Nogai and Crimean Tartars—Defence of the north-eastern frontier—"Banks service"—Fortified lines of defence—"Watch and post service"—The question of the military and industrial organisation of the official class—The *pomiestïe* system.

WE have now studied the position of the new Muscovite boyars both with regard to the Tsar and with regard to the administration of the State. Yet the political importance of these boyars was not confined to their administrative activity alone, since, besides being an order of superior councillors and coadjutors of the State, they were companions-in-arms to their Sovereign. Regarded from this point of view, indeed, they constituted no more than the upper *stratum* of the multitudinous military-official class which arose in the Muscovite Empire during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: yet the circumstance that they differed from the rest of the community in their also being the *ruling* section of the population caused them to figure as what might be termed the staff, the body of officers, of the class in question. Let us, therefore, make a general survey of the position and composition of the class of which the boyars formed one constituent portion.

At the period under study its composition was exceedingly complex; so much so that, to understand its component elements, we must recall the composition of the community in an appanage. We have seen that, in such a State, the idea of subordination of subjects to ruler had no place, but that between the free section of the population of an appanage and its prince there prevailed only relations based upon contract and mutual advantage. Thus the community was divided into classes according to the nature of the services performed by individuals for their prince. Some rendered him military service, and were known as boyars or free servitors; others

acted as officials of his household, and were known as *slugi dvorovīe* or court servitors; while others leased of him lands, urban and rural, and, owing to their being liable to him for *tiaglo* or land-cess, were usually known as *tiaglīe liudi* or "cess men"—though other names for this class were *zemskīe liudi*, or "lands men," and *tchernīe liudi*, or "common men." Such were the three fundamental divisions into which the free section of the community of an appanage was divided—namely, free servitors, with the boyars at their head, court servitors, and landholders, urban and rural. As non-freemen, slaves did not constitute a class in the strict *social and juridical* meaning of the term, while, with regard to persons who occupied a special position under the care of the Church,[1] they did not so much form a separate class as constitute a *community parallel to* the temporal community and known as "Church folk." Of this ecclesiastical community the members possessed an administration and a tribunal of their own, and enjoyed certain privileges peculiar to themselves. Likewise, they were divided, within their own body, into classes homogeneous with those of the parallel, the temporal, community. That is to say, they were divided into Church boyars, Church servitors, Church peasantry, and so forth.

All these *strata* of an appanage community either entered intact into, or contributed their share to, the composition of the new official class in the Muscovite State. The core of that class consisted of boyars and free servitors who had served at the court of Moscow in the old days when Moscow itself was, as yet, but an appanage. Nevertheless their old contract relations with their prince had given place to obligatory State duties fixed by law, since from the middle of the fifteenth century onwards the composition of the old-time court *entourage* of Moscow began to be complicated by the introduction of military elements from elsewhere. Such elements consisted of (1) descendants of former Suzerain and appanage princes who had either lost or resigned their thrones, and thereafter had entered the service of Moscow, and (2) boyars and free servitors of *quondam* ruling princes who had passed with their masters into the ranks of Muscovite officialdom. Although these two elements ultimately became wholly absorbed into the composition of the new Muscovite official class, they, for the time being, preserved their old local nomen-

[1] See vol. i. p. 166.

clature, and are sometimes to be found set down even in documents of the sixteenth century as "Prince of Rostov," "Prince of Starodub," "Court Servitor of Tver," and so forth.

Also, the new class of which I am speaking became augmented by elements which were neither military nor free by origin. One category of such elements consisted of persons who had filled menial posts at the courts of former Suzerain or appanage princes—posts such as those of clerk, major-domo, paymaster, usher, scrivener, secretary, groom, huntsman, gardener, and so on. With the middle of the fifteenth century, however, these persons began to acquire lands of the Muscovite Tsar on the same footing as did members of the military-official class proper, and so to rank with that class, and to be liable, in virtue of their land tenure, to military service.

A second category of originally non-free and non-military elements consisted of ex-slaves of former appanage boyars and gentry whom their masters had been accustomed to arm and take with them when proceeding on military service. The fact that these ex-slaves were used to the carriage of arms caused the Muscovite Government to award some of them lands, and thus to render them liable to military duty on the same footing as was the military class proper. Thus, after the fall of Novgorod the Great we find a body of forty-seven such ex-slaves and their families being selected from a number of princely and boyar households, and awarded estates in the newly-conquered Novgorodian *piatina*[1] of Vodi, where thenceforth they ranked among the local gentry.

A third category consisted of elements contributed by the *tiaglie liudi* and the clergy respectively to the composition of the new military-official class in Moscow. Leaseholders of State lands and sons of the clergy—the two contributions referred to—joined the military-official class in three ways. (1) With the middle of the fifteenth century there became established a rule by which all personal landowners were made liable to military service in virtue of their land tenure. On the fall successively of Novgorod, of Pskov, and of Viatka the Muscovite Government found established in each of those commonwealths a number of landed *gorozhané* (burghers), boyars, *zhitïe liudi*,[2] and *zemstsi*,[2] and, classing them under the one heading of "land-

[1] See vol. i. p. 321.

[2] See vol. i. pp. 344 and 346.

owners," impressed them, as such, into the Muscovite service. Some of these persons it left where they were, but others it transferred to the central provinces of Moscow, where it allotted them either *otchini* or leasehold lands in place of the estates of which they had been deprived. Thus, in 1488 a body of over 7000 *zhiłie liudi* was transported to the central provinces of the Muscovite Empire; and the procedure subsequently adopted in their case was probably the same as in that of the batch of over 1000 Novgorodian boyars, *zhiłie liudi*, and merchants who, in the following year, suffered similar transportation from their homes, and were allotted estates in the neighbourhood of Moscow, Vladimir, Murom, and Rostov. That is to say, to replace the dispossessed Novgorodians there were dispatched to Novgorodian territory those ex-slaves of appanage boyars to whom I have referred above. Similar exchanges took place after the fall of Pskov and Viatka. (2) With the growth in the volume of business transacted in the State clerical departments there took place a great increase in the number of State clerks and secretaries. These persons were mostly chosen from educated members of the ecclesiastical community, or from the ranks of the metropolitan *prostonarodïe*:[1] wherefore we find Prince Kurbski sarcastically remarking that the majority of the Muscovite official scriveners of his day ("servants unto whom the Tsar doth trust above all") "do come of priests' sons and of the simple people." Now, in some cases such clerks and secretaries received for their services, or acquired for themselves, both *otchini* and *pomiestia*:[2] which brought them under the rule of military service, and obliged them thenceforth to furnish bands of men-at-arms, hired or bond. Later it often happened that the sons of these officials did not succeed their fathers in the clerical service, but remained resident on their family estates, and performed thence their military functions in the same manner as did the rest of the military-official section of the population. (3) In addition to persons permanently belonging to the military-official class (and therefore permanently liable to military service, as an hereditary class obligation entailed upon them by their *otechestvo*), the Muscovite Government frequently recruited forces for a given military campaign from among the State leaseholding classes, urban and rural. Ecclesiastical and lay owners who were exempt from the performance

[1] Lower orders or populace.

[2] For explanation of this term see next chapter.

of personal military service (owners such as cathedral bodies, monastic institutions, boyars employed at court, and widows) customarily sent detachments of mercenaries from their estates, or else of armed slaves if no mercenaries were available. Another expedient resorted to by the Muscovite Government was to impress into its service a certain percentage of "sons of fathers, brethren of brethren, and nephews of uncles" from among the non-official population at large, no matter whether they were town or country dwellers, State leaseholders, or members of any category whatsoever. Lastly, in the towns adjacent to the Steppes there dwelt a large number of Cossacks, and these also the Government was able to call upon whenever additional forces were required.

Together the categories named formed a reserve of warlike material from which the Government could draw as many men as it needed for a given expedition; those selected being used to fill up what might be called the *cadres*, or bodies of permanent, hereditary members of the military-official class. Thus in 1585 a whole *posse* of Cossacks of the Don—289 in number—were raised to the rank of "sons of boyars" (the lowest grade of the provincial nobility), and allotted estates in their several localities. Likewise, the seventeenth-century historian Kotoshikhin tells us (in his description of the old Muscovite Empire) that, whenever the State declared war against a neighbour, it proceeded to recruit men-at-arms from *every* rank of the population, including even slaves and *krestiané*, and that some of the latter were rewarded for their services with grants of small *pomiestia* or *otchini*, and acquired the rank of "sons of boyars."

Such were the indigenous *strata* of population which contributed elements to the new Muscovite military-official class. Also, as in the appanage period, there continued a constant influx of men-at-arms from abroad—from Poland, from the Tartar Hordes, and, most of all, from Lithuania. Sometimes the Muscovite Government impressed these immigrants wholesale into its service. For instance, in the reign of Vassilii III. there arrived in Moscow a band of Western Russians, under a Prince Glinski, who had lands allotted them near Murom, and became known in the district as "Glinski's men," or more simply "the Lithuanians." Similarly, the year 1535 (when Princess Helena was regent) saw no fewer than 300 Lithuanian families—men, women, and children—arrive in Moscow for the

purpose of enrolling themselves under the Muscovite Tsar. Again, provincial nobility registers of the reign of Ivan IV. reveal names of certain "Lithuanian incomers" included among those of State landholders in the districts of Kolomna and other towns. Still greater was the influx of immigrants from the Tartar regions. When Vassilii the Dark was released from his captivity in Kazan there returned with him to Moscow the eldest son of the local Khan, one Kassim, and also a contingent of his retainers. Later—*i.e.* at about the middle of the fifteenth century—we see these warriors allotted the town of Meshtcherski Gorodetz and its district, and the place being known thenceforth as Kassimov, after the name of the Khan's eldest son. In the same way, the reign of Ivan IV. saw large numbers of Tartar mirzas awarded lands near Romanov on the Volga, and enjoying the income from the same. Many immigrants of this kind received Christian baptism after they had become Russian landowners,[1] and so became wholly fused with the official class. Seventeenth-century registers of the provincial nobility show us that the vicinity of Moscow, Kaluga, and other towns had come to contain hundreds of such converted Mongols—though their patronymics make it clear that their fathers, the original assignees of the lands during the preceding century, had remained Moslem to the end. Also, there has survived to us a Tartar document which throws a good deal of light upon the process of Mongolian permeation of the official class of Moscow. In 1589 a certain converted Tartar named Kireika presented a petition to the Tsar, in which he stated that, many years ago, he had left his native Crimea and joined the Cossacks of the Don, whose leader he had served for fifteen years in his struggles with the Tartars of the Crimea. Finally he (Kireika) had left the Don country for Putivl, where, five years before the presentation of the current petition, he had taken unto himself a wife. Would the Tsar, therefore, be graciously pleased to command that Kireika's establishment be "whitewashed"—*i.e.* exempted from taxation? If so, he (Kireika) would in equal degree be pleased to serve the Lord of Moscow on the same terms as did the other non-taxpaying gentry of Putivl.

These, then, formed the constituent elements of the Muscovite military-official class. Although it is difficult to judge with any cer-

[1] See p. 80.

tainty of their *numerical relation* to one another, there has come down to us what is known as the *Barchatnaid' Kniga* or "Velvet Book"—an official genealogical register which was compiled during the regency of Sophia (*i.e.* after the abolition of the *miestnichestvo*) on the basis of the old *Rodoslovetz* and *razriadi*.[1] In it we find some 930 families who then constituted what might be called the *nucleus* of the Muscovite official class—constituted, that is to say, the *stratum* of population which later became known as the *stolbovöe dvorianstvo* or principal nobility. Although the "Book" does not afford us any *data* which allow of our estimating the numerical relation of those families according to the *social* origin of their founders, it enables us to form an approximate idea of the then composition of the official class according to the *racial* origin of the families which are included in its pages. Thus Russian (*i.e.* Great Russian) families would seem to have constituted 33 per cent. of the whole, Polish-Lithuanian and Western Russian families 24 per cent., German and Western European 25 per cent., and Tartar and Oriental generally 17 per cent.—leaving 1 per cent. doubtful.

Such diversity of social and ethnographical elements was bound to render the official *stratum* of Muscovite society of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries an extremely ill-adjusted one; and though identical rights and obligations gradually caused those elements to coalesce into a single corporation, and corporate rights and obligations to supplement identical education, manners, ideas, and interests in welding the whole into that compact, homogeneous *stratum* which, under the name of the *dvorianstvo* or gentry, long stood at the head of the Russian community and has left deep traces of its influence even upon the population of our own day, as yet (*i.e.* in the sixteenth century) nothing of the kind existed, seeing that the military-official class of that period could scarcely be described as a compact, homogeneous whole. This is clear from its service organisation alone, since towards the close of the century it became a professional hierarchy graded "according unto *otechestvo* and service." That is to say, it became ranged in a number of ranks or *tchini*. These *tchini*, again, were divided into three groups, which, superimposed the one upon the other horizontally, consisted of (1) ranks embracing privy councillors and the like, (2) ranks embracing other officials in service in the capital, and (3) ranks embracing officials

[1] See pp. 45 and 47.

in service in the provinces. This hierarchical ladder strongly resembles our own modern table of ranks, yet differs from it in the fact that, whereas ranks in our modern service are supposed to be attained in accordance with a legal system and as the reward of intellectual fitness and personal service, promotion in the old Muscovite State went, not by personal service, but by *otechestvo*—*i.e.* by the service of fathers and grandfathers. Consequently ranks were essentially hereditary. A member of the boyar aristocracy usually began his career in the second group, and rose to the first, whereas a commoner seldom attained even to the second. In other words, a patrician usually started from the point which a plebeian rarely reached at all.

Likewise it is not easy to determine the *numerical extent* of the military-official class as constituted at the end of the sixteenth century—*i.e.* at the period when its recruitment was complete. Giles Fletcher, English Ambassador at the court of Moscow in 1588–89, estimates the number of persons then in receipt of annual salaries and holding permanent posts in the Muscovite service at 100,000, but of the host of minor gentry of the third group of ranks whom it was usual to mobilise only for a given expedition, and then to dismiss to their homes again, he makes no mention. Nor does he include in this estimate those aliens in the Muscovite service—Tartars of Kazan, Morduines, and Tcheremissians—whom Captain Margeret,[1] at a later date, computed to number 28,000. Now, the *razriadnia kniga*[2] of the Polotsk[3] expedition of 1563 states that the investing force which the Tsar then took with him included over 30,000 men-at-arms: yet this is omitting all mention of those armed household slaves whom landowners of the official class were wont to include in their train when proceeding on military service. Hence the returns given by the register of the army before Polotsk should at least be doubled, if not trebled—though contemporary writers were certainly exaggerating when they estimated the gross total to have reached between 280,000 and 400,000 men. Again, in 1581, when Batory was besieging Pskov with 30,000 warriors, and Prince Golitzin was investing Novgorod the Great with 40,000, the Tsar (so we are told by a contemporary chronicle) had under him, before the walls of Staritz, an additional force of 300,000;

[1] A French mercenary in the service of Rus from 1601 to 1606.
[2] Register of *razriadi*, or muster-roll of officers.
[3] Polotsk then belonged to Poland.

while to these totals must be added the many thousands who would be garrisoning the towns already taken by Batory (Polotsk, Sokol, Velikia Luki, and other places), and also the still greater number who must have fallen at the storming of those towns. Indeed, Margeret, in enumerating the constituent portions of this great host, avers that, jointly, they attained "*un nombre incroyable.*"

The recruiting of such a multitudinous military-official class was, of necessity, accompanied by profound changes in the social structure of the Muscovite State. It was a process closely bound up with the same fundamental factor from which arose all the phenomena previously studied—namely, with the factor comprised in the territorial expansion of the Empire. The formation of new frontiers had had the effect of placing the State in direct contact with such external and alien foes as the Swedes, the Tartars, the Lithuanians, and the Poles, until the Muscovite Empire had come to resemble an armed camp surrounded on three sides by a hostile force. Two of those sides, the north-western and the south-eastern, presented a long and irregular front to the enemy; so that while, in the one direction, the struggle rarely, if ever, ceased, in the other it never ceased at all. So completely, during the sixteenth century, was this the normal condition of things that we find Herberstein stating it as his opinion that, for Moscow, peace was an accident, and war the general rule. On the north-western, or European, front the struggle was with Sweden and Livonia for the Baltic seaboard, and with Poland-Lithuania for Western Rus. Between the years 1492 and 1595 there occurred three Swedish wars and seven wars with Poland-Lithuania and Livonia. Consequently, since the period occupied by these wars covered, in all, fifty years, it may be said that the term 1492–1595 saw Rus practically fight a year and rest a year in regular succession. Even more ceaseless and exhausting was the struggle on the south-eastern, or Asiatic, front, since it constituted a perennial ferment which allowed neither of peace nor of an armistice nor of regular rules of warfare. Fletcher tells us that it was an annual occurrence for one or more "contendings" to occur between Moscow and the Tartars of the Crimea, the Nogai Tartars, and other Oriental aliens. The Golden Horde overspread the South during the fifteenth century, and, on being dispersed early in the sixteenth, gave birth to fresh Tartar units in the shape of the Khanates of Kazan, Astrakhan, and the Crimea, while the whole of the country beyond the Volga, as

well as those portions of the shores of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov which were situated between the rivers Kuban and Dnieper, became overrun by nomads known as the Nogai Tartars. After the fall of Kazan and Astrakhan the Tartars of the Crimea continued to trouble Moscow even more than those two Khanates had done, owing to the connection of their peninsula with the Turks, who first conquered it in 1475. Covered with an arid waste of Steppe, and joined to the mainland only by the Perekop (a narrow neck of land additionally fortified with a lofty rampart), the country formed a brigands' stronghold to which no access could be gained from the continent. Although, in describing the Tartars, the Lithuanians, and the Muscovites of the middle sixteenth century, the Lithuanian writer Michaelon attributes to the Crimea only some 30,000 horsemen, it must also be remembered that these could always draw upon the innumerable Tartar bands which infested the great region of the Steppes between the Urals and the Lower Danube. At all events, both in 1571 and 1572 the Khan of the Crimea succeeded in attacking Moscow with forces amounting to, at the lowest estimate, 120,000 warriors. In short, the Crimean Khanate represented a gang of brigands specially equipped for raiding Poland-Lithuania and Muscovy. Fletcher writes that they attacked the confines of the Muscovite Empire at least once or twice every year—occasionally at Trinity-tide, but more often during the harvest season, when, owing to the inhabitants being scattered over the fields, the capture of booty was the easier to effect: though now and then a *winter* raid also took place, since, at that season, the frost facilitated the passage of rivers and swamps. Although, in the early sixteenth century, the great Southern Steppe began a little to the south of Old Riazan on the Oka and Elets on the Bwistraia Sosnia, this did not prevent the Tartars (armed as they were, in irregular fashion, with bows and arrows, short scimitars and poniards—less frequently with spears; mounted on small, but strong and hardy, Steppe ponies; unimpeded with any sort of baggage; and subsisting wholly upon a frugal store of dried grain, or of cheese made from mares' milk) from traversing that expanse with ease, even though it meant the covering of at least a thousand versts of desert road. Constant raids of this kind rendered the Tartars thoroughly familiar with the region, as well as inured them to its peculiarities, made them acquainted with the best *shliachi*, or bridle-paths, and taught them to employ tactical methods pre-eminently

suited to the purpose in hand. Avoiding all river crossings, and picking their way along the intervening plateaus, they would make for the Muscovite frontier by way of what was known as the *Muravski Shliach*—a route leading from the Perekop to Tula, and passing thence between the basins of the Dnieper and the Northern Donetz. Carefully hiding their movements from the Muscovite steppe-riders, they would worm their way along the shallow ravines and watercourses of the region; taking care never to light a fire by night, and never neglecting to throw out scouts in all directions. Arrived at the borders of the Muscovite dominions, they would change their tactics for another plan of campaign of their own devising. Penetrating in a solid mass into some populous district for a distance of about a hundred versts,[1] they would then turn in their tracks, and, throwing out long wings to either side of the main body, sweep everything into their path—their progress accompanied, throughout, by fire and pillage, and by the capture of slaves, cattle, or anything else that was at once portable and valuable. Such were the annual raids of the Tartars when, in gangs of a few hundreds or a few thousands, they would make unexpected descents upon the Muscovite frontier, and, "hovering there like unto flocks of wild geese" (to use Fletcher's expression), would dart hither and thither wherever booty was to be scented. Above all things, they sought to capture slaves, whether boys or young girls, and for this purpose they took with them thongs to bind their captives with, and large panniers in which to sling the younger of the kidnapped innocents. Subsequently their prizes would be sold to Turkey and other countries —Kaffa, in the Crimea, being the chief market for such wares, where tens of thousands of such captives were always to be seen for sale, as the result of raids upon Poland-Lithuania and Muscovy. Thence the captives would be loaded on to ships, and dispatched to Constantinople, Anatolia, and other points in Europe, Asia, and Africa: with the result that, in that sixteenth century, many a nursegirl in the maritime towns of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea soothed her master's children to sleep with a Polish or a Russian cradle-song. Indeed, the Crimea knew no servants other than such captives. At the same time, their skill in making their escape always caused Muscovite slaves to go cheaper in the market than Polish or Lithuanian. Leading his living wares into the square in strings whereof every ten files were

[1] = (approximately) 68 English miles.

chained together at the neck, the slave-merchant was accustomed to bawl that "these my slaves are of the freshest, the most simple, and the least cunning, and have been brought hither *from the Kingdom*,[1] *and not from Muscovy*." So great was the supply of Polish-Lithuanian captives that Michaelon tells us that, one day, a Jewish money-lender who kept a stall at one of the gates admitting to the Perekop inquired of the Lithuanian chronicler whether the endless procession of slaves whom he saw entering the gate did not constitute all that remained of the population of Michaelon's native country!

Since mutual grudges and misunderstandings between Poland-Lithuania and Moscow (not to mention governmental shortsightedness, and neglect of the interests of their respective peoples) always prevented the two States from combining together against the robbers of the Steppes, the Muscovite Government had to employ special resources of its own for the defence of its southern frontier. The first of those resources was *beregovaia sluzhba*, or "banks service"—so called because it entailed an annual spring mobilisation on the banks of the river Oka. In certain *razriadnia knigi* of the sixteenth century we meet with graphic evidence of the life of terror then reigning on the southern borders of the State, as well as of the strenuous efforts made by the Government to safeguard that region. As soon as ever spring opened, the *Razriadni Prikaz*, or Headquarters of the Staff, would begin to seethe with activity as the various clerks and secretaries dispatched to every district, central and outlying, official orders for the mobilisation of men-at-arms and notice of the several rallying-points and dates of assembly to be observed (the most usual date chosen for the purpose being the feast of the Annunciation, or March 25th). Next, *voievodi* would be appointed from headquarters, to superintend the process of mobilisation (first seeking out and knouting any defaulters who concealed themselves), and to accompany the troops to service. "Sons of boyars" and city burghers were required to march "properly horsed, armed, and attended"—*i.e.* to furnish such a complement of horses, weapons, and armed household servants as was decreed by official regulation. As soon as ever the troops had been inspected in detail at the various rallying-points, the *voievodi* would (if danger already threatened from the Steppes) proceed to combine their forces

[1] *i.e.* of Poland-Lithuania.

into five *polki*, or regiments[1]—the great regiment being stationed at Serpukhov, the right wing at Kaluga, the left wing at Kashira, the advanced guard at Kolomna, and the rear guard at Alexin. Also, there would be thrown out in front of these corps a sixth regiment, known as the *letuchi ertöul*, or flying column, which was designed to serve as an intelligence department—*i.e.* as a body of scouts whose first hint of danger should act as the signal for the stationary regiments to move out from the Oka, and to deploy to the Steppe frontier. In this manner fully 65,000 men were annually mobilised for defence service—although occasionally it happened that, if all remained quiet in the Steppes until the arrival of the late autumn (the usual season for disbandment), such troops were never called upon to take the field at all.

A second defensive expedient was the building of fortified lines. These were designed to hinder the Tartars from penetrating into the country before the regular season of mobilisation was due, and consisted of chains of towns, forts, and watch-towers around each of which ran a castellated wall or palisade, with a fringe of ditches, pointed stakes, *abattis* built of brushwood, and obstacles formed of tree-trunks cut from the forest reserves—the whole being designed to impede the movements of the mounted robbers of the Steppes. The oldest fortified line, and therefore the one lying nearest to Moscow, followed the course of the river Oka from Nizhni Novgorod to Serpukhov, where it turned southwards towards Tula, and then continued to Kozelsk. In front of it ran a subsidiary line, which, embracing Riazan, Tula, Odoiev, and Lichvin, stretched for 400 versts between the Oka and the Shisdra, and was studded at intervals with obstacles, watch-towers, and fortified gates. A second main line, built during the reign of Ivan IV., stretched from Alatir to the Sura, and embraced Temnikov, Shazsk, Riazhsk, Dankov, Novosil, and Orel; from which latter point it turned south-westwards towards Novgorod Sieverski, and then bent round again by Putivl and Rilsk. It too was strengthened by a subsidiary line of minor fortifications. Lastly, at about the close of the sixteenth century (*i.e.* during the reign of Feodor) there arose a third main line of defence, but one so irregular in its formation that it could more correctly be described as a triple series of towns trending towards the Steppe. Kromi, Livni, and Elets; Koursk, Oskol, and Voronezh; Bielgorod and Valoniki—these were the three groups of towns which

[1] *i.e.* army corps. See p. 48.

formed its several sections; until, with the building of Borisov (in 1600) the chain, as a whole, rested upon the middle course of the Northern Donetz. The original population of these towns consisted of men-at-arms only, but in time there became added to them a number of civilians from neighbouring localities. An old manuscript concerning the appearance of a miraculous image of the Holy Mother at Koursk affords us some *data* as to the building and settlement of the towns which this line comprised. Koursk was one of them, and arose on the site of an older town of the same name which had been a place of importance during the eleventh century. In the early thirteenth century, however, the Khan Batu razed the original city to its foundations, and for a long while the district remained so absolutely desolate that forests overran it again. Nevertheless, those forests proved so rich in game and wild bees that eventually pioneers began to be attracted thither from Rilsk and other localities; until only the constant raids of the Tartars prevented the district from becoming permanently resettled. At length the fame of the miracles wrought by a local image of the Holy Mother reached the ears of the Tsar Feodor himself, and induced him to command that the town should be rebuilt on its former site, which now had lain waste for three and a half centuries; after which further reports concerning the natural resources of the region attracted thither such a numerous population from Mtzensk, Orel, and other towns that once more Koursk and its district became a settled locality.

With the building of these fortified lines went the organisation of what was known as *storozovaia i stanichnaia sluzhba*, or "watch and post service"—Moscow's third (and a very important) defensive resource. Let me describe that service as worked in the year 1571 when a special committee, under a boyar named Prince Vorotinski, had been constituted to act as its supervisory staff. From every town in the second line of defence and part of the third there would be dispatched certain scouts known as *storozha i stanichniki*, or "watch and post men." Setting forth in different directions, and bound for different posts of observation, these scouts (all of them either "sons of boyars" or Cossacks, and riding in squads of two, four, or more horsemen) were charged with the duty of keeping an eye upon the movements of the Nogai and Crimean Tartars in the Steppes, "to the

end that fighting men come not unawares with war upon the outer confines of the State." The posts of observation for which these scouts were bound (those posts lay at a distance of four or five days' ride from the towns) numbered, in the year of which I am speaking, seventy-three, and were divided into twelve chains, extending from the Suda to the Seim, and thence to the Vorskla and the Northern Donetz. No post was more than a day's ride (or, at most, a day and a half's) from the next one, so that speedy communication between them was always possible. Likewise they were divided into "near" and "distant" posts, and named according to the towns which served as their bases. *Storozha* had to keep their steeds constantly ready—"never from their horses to take the saddle"—and, above all things, to watch any fords which the Tartars might be in the habit of crossing when making a raid. As for *stanichniki*, their chief duty was to ride certain fixed *urochishtcha* ("beats") in couples (these "beats" extended to from six to fifteen versts on either side of a post of observation), and, at the first sign of Tartars, to send word, with all speed, to the nearest town, while others of their number were to ride round the enemy, and attempt an estimate of his strength from the number of hoof-prints which he had left upon the *shliach*, or desert road. The system of transmitting intelligence evolved by these steppe-riders was a most complete one. Captain Margeret relates that a squad of *storozha* usually took up their stand near some tall, isolated tree, and that, while one of them kept watch in the upper branches of the tree, the remainder grazed their ready-saddled horses at the foot. As soon as ever a tell-tale cloud of dust was perceived on the far-off *shliach*, one of the party would leap into the saddle, and set off at full gallop for the nearest post of observation; whence, the instant that the first galloper was sighted, a second *storozh* would start, in like manner, for the post next in the line; and so on. In this fashion word would be passed onwards until it reached the base town, and even Moscow itself.

Thus by slow and sure degrees the Steppes were won from the brigands who infested them. Every year during the sixteenth century thousands of the frontier population laid down their lives for their country, while tens of thousands of Moscow's best warriors were dispatched southwards to guard the inhabitants of the more central provinces from pillage and enslavement. If, then, we consider the

amount of time and of moral and material resources which was spent upon this grim and exhausting struggle with the crafty robbers of the desert, we shall have no need to ask ourselves what the people of Eastern Europe were doing during the period when the peoples of the West were progressing rapidly in industry, in trade, in social life, and in the arts and sciences.

Of course, the military and industrial organisation of the official class had to conform both to the conditions of this external warfare and to the economic resources at the disposal of the State. Continual perils from without obliged the Muscovite Government to maintain very large armed forces; and, in proportion as increased conscription to those forces became more and more imperative, the question of their upkeep became more and more pressing. In appanage days the men-at-arms attached to the princely courts had had their maintenance secured upon three principal sources—namely, upon monetary salaries, grants of hereditary lands, and *kormlenia*, or administrative posts to which perquisites were attached. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, however, these sources proved insufficient for the support of the ever-increasing hosts of officials and men-at-arms. Consequently there arose an insistent need for a new economic expedient. The unification of Northern Rus by Moscow had produced no fresh resources as regards any appreciable increase in trade or industry, and exploitation of natural wealth still remained the dominant industrial factor. Consequently the only new form of capital which had accrued to the Muscovite Tsar-Landowner lay in the great waste or partially cultivated territories which were settled, in parts, by *krestiané*. This was the only species of capital upon which he could rely for the maintenance of his military servitors. On the other hand, the resources at the disposal of the foe—especially of the Tartar—with whom Moscow was forced to engage in ceaseless conflict necessitated powers of swift mobilisation and a constant preparedness for attacks upon the Muscovite frontier. Consequently the idea arose that if the official class were distributed in greater or less numbers (according as there was need of local defence) both over the inner and over the outlying provinces of the State (but more especially the outlying), it would become converted into a landowning class, and so act as a living rampart against raids from the Steppes. For this scheme the great stretches of territory acquired by the Muscovite State seemed eminently suitable: with the result that, in the hands

of the Muscovite Government, land became an industrial means of securing to the State a sufficiency of military service, while landownership by the official class became the basis of a system of national defence. This union of landownership with national defence led to what I may call the *pomiestïe* system—the system which, in the history of Russian social progress from the middle fifteenth century onwards, constitutes the *second* fundamental factor due to the territorial expansion of the Muscovite Empire (the *first* being, as we have seen, the conscription of a multitudinous service, or official, class of the population): and, inasmuch as few factors have exercised so great an influence upon the formation of the State order and the social life of the Russian land as this system, we may proceed, next, to study it.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

CHAPTER VIII

Pomiestïe land tenure — The opinions of two historians concerning the origin of *pomiestïe* law—Origin of *pomiestïe* land tenure—The rules of the system—*Pomiestïe* lots and salaries—*Pomiestïe* allotment—*Proxhitki* or pensions assigned to widows and daughters of a deceased State servitor.

By the term "*pomiestïe* system" I mean the system of obligatory military service, as a condition of land tenure, which became established in the Muscovite Empire during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. At the basis of the system lay the *pomiestïe*, which was a portion of land conferred upon a member of the official class, either in return for military service performed or in order to secure the performance of military service in the future. Like that service, the possession of the *pomiestïe* was temporary—though usually for the lifetime of the recipient; and it was this same personal, conditional, and temporary character of land tenure which distinguished the *pomiestïe* from the *otchina*, or absolutely-owned, hereditary estate.

In the origin and development of the system we see one of the most perplexing, as well as one of the most important, questions in the history of Russian State law and industry. Consequently it is one to which historical jurists have devoted much attention. Of their utterances on the subject I will cite a few of the most authoritative. In his *History of Our Russian State Laws* Nevolin says that, although some such conditional system of land tenure, as well as certain rules for its regulation, undoubtedly existed previous to the reign of Ivan III., the principles of *pomiestïe* law date from the reign itself, when the term *pomiestïe* first came into use. Likewise he considers it probable that the development of the system was influenced by Byzantine State jurisprudence, and names as the introductory agency through which it entered Muscovite State life the marriage of Ivan III. with Sophia. "At all events," he concludes, "the term *pomiestïe* must have been fashioned on the analogy of the Greek word

τοπίον, which was a title given, in the Byzantine Empire, to hereditary estates conferred upon individuals in return for an obligation of military service: such obligation devolving, under the same condition, from father to son." Yet at least the *adjective* of the term *pomiestïe* entered our ancient Russian language before the coming of Sophia, since in a circular letter issued by the Metropolitan John in 1454 we find appanage princes styled "*pomiestnïe kniazia*" in contradistinction to *Velikïe Kniazia* or Suzerain Princes. Therefore neither the term *pomiestïe* nor the idea of the system which afterwards became founded upon it can well have been copied from any term or institute of Byzantine State law. Another historian, Gradovski, deals with the question in more complicated fashion. *Pomiestïe* tenure, he says, presupposes a supreme proprietor, to whom the land belonged as his absolute property; and inasmuch as no idea of a supreme proprietor can have arisen during the first period of Russian history, seeing that the Russian prince of that day was *hosudar*, or overlord, only, and not paramount owner of the soil, it follows that the idea must have originated during the *Mongol* period, when, as representing the authority of the Khan, the Russian princes enjoyed, in their appanages, the same rights as the Khan himself enjoyed in the territory under his immediate control. Subsequently (continues Gradovski) the Russian princes succeeded to the Khan's rights *absolutely:* and it was this act of succession which struck the first blow at the principle of private ownership of land.

As a matter of fact, in thus explaining the origin of the *pomiestïe* system, the two historians are really speaking of the origin of *pomiestïe law*—and the law and the system represent two different historical phases. Without entering, therefore, into the vexed question of the origin of *pomiestïe law*, let us confine our attention to the factors responsible for the development of the *pomiestïe system.*

Like everything else in the Muscovite Empire, *pomiestïe* tenure originated during the appanage period, since its primal source was the agrarian *ménage* of the Muscovite appanage prince. Therefore, to explain the origin of *pomiestïe* tenure, we must once more recall the composition of the community in an appanage. We have seen that, at the court of such a State, there existed two kinds of servitors—namely, free servitors, or men-at-arms, and household servitors. Free servitors constituted the prince's military service, and, though serving

him on terms of contract, were free to come and to go without loss of rights in any *otchini* which they might have acquired in their late appanage, seeing that their service relations with an appanage prince were altogether distinct from their *agrarian* relations with him. This distinction between the service and the agrarian relations of military officials was always strongly insisted upon in inter-princely treaties. For instance, an agreement concluded among themselves in 1341 by the sons of Ivan Kalita makes the younger brethren say to the eldest of the family (Simeon): "Both unto our boyars and free servitors and unto thine shall be their will; and if one of them shall go from us unto thee, or from thee unto us, none shall hold him in despite." This means that, if a free servitor were to leave the service of any one brother and take service with any other one, his late master was not to visit the servitor with any penalty for this secession, but to continue to see to the interests of his (the servitor's) *otchina* as though its owner were still serving in the appanage.[1] Thus between landownership and free military service there existed no connection. On the other hand, household servitors constituted the prince's *domestic* service, and their relations with him were usually conditioned by land tenure. Servitors of this kind consisted of stewards, clerks, scriveners, huntsmen, grooms, gardeners, beekeepers, artisans, and workmen attached to the prince's establishment; and, since they were altogether distinct from the free servitors or men-at-arms, the princes always bound themselves, in their mutual treaties, not to impress such officials into their *military* service. Some household servitors were personally free, while others of them ranked with the prince's *kholopi* or slaves. To both categories the prince allotted lands in reward for service performed, or to secure the performance of service in the future, and his agrarian relations with them are found clearly defined in a will executed in the year 1410 by Prince Vladimir Andreivitch of Serpukhov. In this document the Prince says of such of his household servitors as had had lands awarded them that, if any beekeeper, gardener, huntsman, or other domestic should refuse to reside upon those allotted lands, "he shall be deprived of the same and go forth, as also shall servitors not wholly under bond who serve not our son Prince Ivan as is befitting, and their lands shall pass unto the said Prince Ivan." By "servitors not wholly under bond" Prince Vladimir

[1] See vol. i. pp. 261 and 263.

evidently meant servitors personally free, as distinguished from *polnïe kholopi*, or full slaves: wherefore the clause signifies that household servitors, bond or free, were to enjoy the use of their lands only so long as they performed services in connection with the princely establishment. Menial duties at court seem to have rendered even personally free household servitors a semi-rightless class, since they could not acquire lands, for their absolute *otchini*, on the same terms as could military servitors. Thus the will of Prince Vladimir contains a proviso that, in the event of a personally free *kliuchnik* (steward) purchasing lands in his (Prince Vladimir's) appanage, and subsequently abandoning the service of its ruler for that of any other master, he should forfeit the estate thus purchased, in spite of his personal freedom. In short, while not wholly depriving household servitors of their personal freedom, the old Russian norm "*Po kliuchu po selskomu kholop*" (which, freely translated, means "A slave in the household shall remain a slave on the land") at least limited their rights in respect of ownership of landed property.

Thus different kinds of service at the court of an appanage prince were rewarded in different ways. To free servitors he awarded *kormi i dovodi*, or administrative and judicial posts to which independent incomes were attached, while to household servitors he granted either lands entailing an obligation of court service or the right to acquire such lands. From the middle of the fifteenth century onwards, however—*i.e.* from the unification of Northern Rus by Moscow—great changes set in in the organisation of the military-official class. In the first place, though the service of men-at-arms still remained military, it ceased to be free, and became obligatory. That is to say, military servitors lost the right of leaving the employ of the Suzerain Prince of Moscow for that of any appanage prince—still less of taking service beyond the Russian borders. In the second place, though ceasing to be free as regards the disposal of their service, military servitors began to have lands allotted them on terms altogether distinct from those on which *otchini* were held. Although such lands were not at first known as *pomiestia*, their possession was none the less marked by a conditional character. This is clear from a clause occurring in the will of Vassilii the Dark, which was executed in 1462. One of the Prince's most zealous supporters in his struggles with Shemiaka was a certain Feodor Bassenok; wherefore upon this same Bassenok the Prince's

mother (Sophia, a daughter of Vitovt) bestowed two villages on certain property belonging to her in the district of Kolomna, while at the same time authorising her son, the Suzerain Prince, to make testamentary re-disposition of the same after her decease. Accordingly her son writes in his will that, on Bassenok's death, the villages referred to are to devolve to the Suzerain Princess, the testator's consort. From this it is clear that the villages conferred upon Bassenok were granted him solely *for his lifetime*: which constitutes one of the distinguishing signs—and the most essential sign—of *pomiestïe* tenure. In the third place, the middle of the fifteenth century saw court household service (which, during the appanage period, had been sharply differentiated from free, or military, service) become united to the profession of arms. That is to say, both ex-household servitors and ex-free servitors now began to be looked upon as military retainers of the Tsar, and to proceed on military expeditions on the same footing as one another. Likewise the two categories began to have State lands allotted them on the same terms as real estate had been acquired, during the fourteenth century, *only by household servitors*, with the exception that the condition of military service (which, in appanage days, had never been imposed upon the latter class) was henceforth imposed upon all servitors alike.

From the time that these changes took place in service relations and in the terms on which land was held by State servitors land tenure assumed a *pomiestïe* character, and estates granted to ex-free and ex-household servitors on condition of rendering both military and household service acquired, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the title of *pomiestia*. Consequently, I repeat, *pomiestïe* tenure developed from the land tenure enjoyed by household servitors under the old appanage princes, and was distinguished from it only by the fact that *pomiestïe* tenure was conditioned by *military and household service alike*. This distinction begins with the middle of the fifteenth century, when the *pomiestïe* became a means of securing both military and household service (without any juridical distinction between the two) and *pomiestïe* tenure developed into a complex—though regular—system which possessed precise rules for governing the allotment of estates to members of the official class. Indeed, rules became indispensable as soon as ever the Government had raised a numerous class of arms-bearing officials whose support needed to be organised through the

agency of the soil. That an immense and systematic allotment of *pomiestia* took place during the latter half of the fifteenth century there is evidence in the fact that there has come down to us a *perepisnaia kniga*, or State register, of the old Novgorodian *piatina* of Vodi—a document compiled in the year 1500. From it we see that in two districts alone of that *piatina* (namely, in the districts of Ladoga and Oriekhov) there were settled, at that time, as many as 106 *pomiestchiki* (owners of *pomiestia*), and that on their lands stood about 3000 homesteads, sheltering some 4000 *krestiané* and their dependants. These figures afford graphic evidence of the rapidity with which *pomiestie* allotment to members of the official class had taken place within a quarter of a century of the fall of Novgorod, as also of the immense development attained by the system, seeing that more than half the arable land in the two districts named was held by *pomiestchiki* who had been transferred thither from the central provinces of Moscow.[1] In the latter region, also, a great development of *pomiestie* tenure must have taken place, seeing that survey registers of the early sixteenth century for delimiting the boundaries of the then district of Moscow and its neighbourhood show that on or near those boundaries there were settled, at that time, not only *otchinniki*, but also large numbers of small *pomiestchiki* of the type (clerks, scriveners, huntsmen, grooms, and so forth) upon whom the princes of the fourteenth century had been accustomed to confer lands in reward for household services performed. Indeed, in the sixteenth century it was a frequent occurrence for members of the official class to be allotted *pomiestia* wholesale: the most remarkable example of this being in 1550, when, to fill a number of vacant posts at court, the Government selected a thousand prominent burghers and "sons of boyars" from one district and another, and settled them *en masse* in the neighbourhood of Moscow. The reason for this particular allocation was that the law required officials actually in attendance upon the throne to possess *otchini* or *pomiestia* close to the capital. For the same reason, to these thousand selected *pomiestchiki* there were added a number of servitors who hitherto had not possessed estates complying with that condition. The dimensions of a *pomiestie* differed according to the rank of the recipient. Boyars and officials in attendance

[1] See p. 107.

upon the throne usually received 200 *tchetverti* (quarters)[1] of arable land apiece, while "sons of boyars," and so forth, were awarded three-fourths or half of that amount. Thus we have an instance in which 1078 persons were settled on a total area of 117,850 *tchetverti*. Soon after the fall of Kazan the Government reorganised both *pomiestïe* tenure and military service by compiling registers in which the official class was divided into sections according to the dimensions of their *pomiestia* and the rates of their salary, while at the same time the latter form of remuneration was brought into precise correlation with the measure of military service performed. In certain extracts from registers compiled in or about the year 1556 we see the name of each official docketed with the extent of his *otchina* or *pomiestïe*, with the number of household servants whom he had to bring with him on a campaign, with the stipulated armament of those servants, and with the rate of his salary. From that time onwards *pomiestïe* tenure became a complex, yet regular, system, founded upon permanent, precise rules. Let me expound its principles as they became established towards the opening of the seventeenth century.

The agrarian relations and agrarian organisation of the official or servitor class were directed by a *bureau* called the *Pomiestni Prikaz*, even as their military relations (in so far as those relations were subject to rule) were directed by the *Razriadni Prikaz*.[2] Likewise, all servitors owned their lands where their service lay (po miestu *sluzhbi*), and performed their service where they owned their lands (po miestu *vladienia*). Hence we can at least *understand* the term *pomiestïe*, whatever its true origin may have been; and a similar significance seems to have been attached to it in ancient Rus. Service bound officials either to the neighbourhood of the capital or to a given province: wherefore they were divided into two principal categories — namely, metropolitan officials and provincial officials. We have seen that the law required the former to possess *otchini* or *pomiestia* close to the metropolis, irrespective of any estates which they might possess elsewhere, while provincial officials had *pomiestia* allotted them strictly where their service lay—*i.e.* where they had to take part in the defence of the Empire by raising bodies of agrarian "militia." At the same

[1] The ancient *tchetvert* was approximately equal to 1½ modern *dessiatini*, or 4.29 English acres.

[2] See p. 115.

time, service liability fell upon *otchini* in the same proportion as upon *pomiestia:* wherefore service was wholly agrarian. At about the middle of the sixteenth century the measure of that service was made to correspond precisely to the value of land: a law of September 20, 1555, ordaining that for every 150 *tchetverti* of "good and cultivable land" there should be furnished for military expeditions one man-at-arms "with an horse and in full array" (or, if the expedition were to be a distant one, with two horses), and that owners of over 100 *tchetverti* of arable land (whether on *otchini* or *pomiestia*) should also bring with them—or send, if they were not personally proceeding on service—such an additional *quota* of armed servants as corresponded to the greater size of their estate.

Okladi or *nadieli* (lots or shares) of *pomiestie* land were apportioned "according to *otechestvo* and to service"—*i.e.* according both to eminence of birth and to quality of service performed or required to be performed. Consequently lots varied greatly in extent. Likewise a *novik* or tyro in the service was seldom granted the whole of his lot immediately, but only a moiety of it: additions being made thereto at a later stage, according as he performed his service with credit. Also, the lot was distinct from the *dacha* or donation of land: the former corresponding directly to the *tchin* or rank (*i.e.* the higher the *tchin*, the larger the lot), and the latter varying inversely with the *otchina*, for the reason that the *pomiestie* was essentially an "*aid*" to the *otchina*. Finally, both to the lot and to the donation there was subsequently added a *pridacha* or supplementary donation, the extent of which depended upon the length and the quality of past service performed. All these conditions might be summed up by saying that the lot varied directly with the rank, the donation in inverse proportion to the *otchina* and to *otechestvo*, and the supplementary donation directly with the length and quality of past service.

Such were the general features of the *pomiestie* system. Turning, next, to details, we meet with individual instances of boyars and other superior officials of the capital being awarded as much as from 800 to 2000 *tchetverti* of land apiece, and lesser officials as much as from 500 to 1000. In the reign of Michael, however, there was passed a law whereby certain officials known as *stolniki*, *striaptchi*, and *dvoriané moskovskie* (various grades of what would now be called "gentlemen-in-waiting") were no longer to be assigned lots exceeding in area

1000 *tchetverti*. As for lots assigned to provincial officials, they varied far more according to rank, length of service, and the number of eligible recipients in a given district than did lots assigned to officials serving only in the capital. For instance, a register for the district of Kolomna for the year 1577 shows us that the smallest lot there awarded was 100 *tchetverti*, and the largest 400 (100 *tchetverti* being, as we have seen, the recognised standard or unit for reckoning incidence of service). In the main, the average lot shown by this register to have been assigned to a servitor in the district of Kolomna was 192 *tchetverti*, whereas in Riazan, where the service population was denser, the average reached only 166. At the same time, the extent of the lot had only a purely conditional—it might even be said, a purely fictitious—importance, nor did it in any way determine the measure of the donation. Thus the above register for Kolomna shows us that the "son of a boyar" who, as the most responsible official in the district, stood at the head of the local list of *pomiestchiki* was nominally awarded as much as 400 *tchetverti* of arable land: yet, in reality, that arable portion may have comprised no more than, say, 20 *tchetverti*, and the rest have been exclusively bush or fallow land, since, no matter to what extent a lot might fall out of cultivation (through lack of capital, implements, or agricultural hands), the waste areas which it contained would be counted in with the rest, and have no allowance made for them in estimating the relation of the lot to the donation. To realise this general disparity between the lot and the donation, let us look for a moment beyond the limits of the period under study. A register for the district of Bieloi, compiled in the year 1622, shows us that, in that locality, a body of 25 persons were selected to constitute the higher officials of the district, and that to those 25 persons were allotted the largest lots and donations. Yet, whereas the total area of the lots (which averaged, in extent, from 500 to 850 *tchetverti* apiece) amounted to as much as 17,000 *tchetverti*, the gross total of the corresponding donations amounted only to 4133 *tchetverti*, or a mere 23 per cent. of the lots. Many similar examples might be cited. In the main, it is clear from agrarian registers that the further Russian settlement was pushed forward towards the Steppes, the more did *pomiestïe* tenure take the place of *otchina* proprietorship. This fact deserves all the more notice in that it explains many of the phenomena which we shall subsequently encounter in the social adjustment and

economic relations of the southern and central districts of the Muscovite Empire of that period.

The *pomiestïe* lot was usually accompanied by a *monetary salary*. Herberstein is the first writer to refer to this addition; but since his information exclusively concerns the times of Vassilii III., it is possible that the rule was in force at an even earlier period—*i.e.* in the times of Ivan III. The amount of the salary depended upon the same conditions as went to determine the dimensions of the lot: wherefore between the two a relation must have existed. In documents of the sixteenth century we find little trace of it, but when we come to the seventeenth century it becomes more apparent. At all events, lists of officials compiled during the century named frequently append to the name of a given *pomiestchik* a note to the effect that "his lot is set against his payment in money." At the same period (*i.e.* the early seventeenth century) there became established a rule whereby in future the salary was to increase with the lot. "From the lot the *pridacha* in money shall not be apart." Kotoshikhin, who wrote at the middle of the seventeenth century, says that, in those days, the salary had a fixed annual ratio—namely, that of a rouble per five *tchetverti* of the lot. Other records, however, make it plain that this ratio was not invariably maintained, but that, in many cases, the salary, like the lot, corresponded to the quality and the length of service. Officials of the higher ranks who were in permanent attendance upon the throne, or liable to annual mobilisation, received their salaries in full and yearly, whereas "sons of boyars" received their pay (according to Herberstein) twice in three years or (according to the *Sudebnik* of 1550) once in three, or even in four, years; while of "sons of boyars" who had no official duties to perform a Muscovite chronicle of the early seventeenth century remarks that they received their salaries once in *five* years, or even at less frequent intervals.

In general, therefore, the *pomiestïe* salary, as a supplement to the *pomiestïe* agrarian income, may be said to have been granted for the purpose either of setting up the recipient in business or of enabling him to take the field, since, in proportion as service liability diminished, the salary became subject to deductions, and ceased altogether when the official concerned happened to be awarded a post which either brought him in an independent income or wholly exempted him from the performance of military duty. Ancient registers remark of officials

of the higher ranks (persons who, as already stated, received their salaries annually) that they "do receive their payment from the *tcheti*," (these were pay-offices at Galitch, Kostroma, and other places which were specially set apart for the direction of the finances of the official class); whereas of officials of the lower ranks the same registers remark that they (the officials) "do receive their payment with their towns" —*i.e.* with the local forces of their districts at such times as those forces were mobilised for active service.

Thus the sixteenth century saw service of the State become a corporate, an hereditary, obligation from which no member of the upper classes was exempt save (according to the *Sudebnik* of 1550) such "sons of boyars" and their sons as the Tsar should see fit to relieve of the obligation. Also, there became established a system whereby service liability devolved from father to son—sons being kept at home and specially educated to fulfil their parent's official duties. A member of the official class usually entered the service of the State on attaining his fifteenth year. Up to that time he ranked as a *nedorosli* or minor, but, after joining the service and being enrolled on the official register, he figured as a *novik* or tyro. Subsequently—if his early career warranted the step—he was allotted a *pomiestie*, and, later, a novice's salary, if he still proved competent and deserving. To that, again, became added supplementary donations of land, until, finally, he blossomed out into a State servitor on full salary. Allotment of *pomiestia* to novices was made in two ways. Elder sons who entered the service while their father still retained his faculties were assigned *pomiestia* apart from their parent, but younger sons who entered the service after their father had begun to fail in his bodily powers were associated with him in his *pomiestie*, as destined to succeed to his duties. As a rule, therefore, a younger son rode in his father's train on military expeditions, and "served" (so the phrase ran) "from his father's *pomiestie*." In a few instances we see all the sons in a family made co-owners of a *pomiestie* with their sire, and allotted portions of it for their particular use.

Such were the principal rules for regulating *pomiestie* allotment. In time, also, there became devised measures whereby provision could be made for the family of a *deceased* servitor. When a servitor died his *pomiestie* generally passed to his sons *jointly*, if they were minors at the time; but if the eldest son had now attained maturity and

become "allotted," he succeeded both to the paternal property and to the guardianship of his younger brothers and sisters. At the same time, certain portions were always set apart for the widow and daughters of the deceased, as *prozhitki* or pensions: the widow retaining her *prozhitok* until her death, second marriage, or any offence on her part which entailed *postrizhenïe* or shaving of the head, and the daughters retaining their *prozhitki* until they reached the legal age of marriage (fifteen). In cases, however, where a daughter became betrothed to a State servitor *before* she had attained the marriageable age, she could take her *prozhitok* with her, on her marriage, as a dowry. Thus all the children of a State servitor took part in the country's service—the sons on horseback, as defenders of the Empire, and the daughters in marriage, as producers of a reserve of such defenders. Lastly, the amounts of land awarded as *prozhitki* depended upon the circumstances of the servitor's demise. If he died at home, his widow was awarded 10 per cent. of his *pomiestïe*, and his daughters 5 per cent. If he died on active service, those percentages were doubled.

Such were the principal features of the *pomiestïe* system. Next let us study its working.

CHAPTER IX

Direct results of the *pomiestïe* system—namely, (1) fusion of *otchina* proprietorship with *pomiestïe* tenure, (2) artificial increase in private landownership, (3) formation of district associations of nobility, (4) creation of a service-landowning proletariat, (5) deterioration in the development of Russian towns and urban industries, and (6) an alteration in the position of the peasantry.

In the last chapter I expounded the principles of the *pomiestïe* system in the form which it had assumed by the beginning of the seventeenth century. Meanwhile its development was accompanied by several important results of which it may be said that they not only made themselves felt in the political and the industrial life of ancient Rus, but are to be felt in Russia to this day. Indeed, to few factors in our ancient history may there be ascribed such a profound revolution in the political adjustment and the economic well-being of the community as was due to this system: for which reason let me point out its more direct results, as manifested up to the close of the sixteenth century.

The first direct result of *pomiestïe* development was a change in the character of *otchina* proprietorship. This change was due to an extension to such proprietorship of the main principle upon which *pomiestïe* tenure was founded. We have seen that, during the appanage period, there existed no connection whatever between free, or State, service and landownership. The agrarian relations of boyars and free servitors to their prince were always kept strictly distinct from their personal, or service, relations to him, so that it was possible for a retainer to serve in one appanage, and to hold an *otchina* in another. This clear-cut distinction was what determined the State significance of land. Land paid taxes, while the individual served. This rule was applied so consistently that boyars or free servitors who acquired lands of peasant communes settled on the prince's fiscal estates had to pay cess thereon equally with the peasants, while, in the reverse case, they forfeited the lands thus purchased, and the latter reverted to the peasants *gratis*. In the same way, even arable land which was tilled by

a State servitor with the labour of his domestic slaves was subject to the general incidence of service through land tenure, and it was not until the latter half of the sixteenth century that a moiety of such land (a moiety proportionate to the *pomiestie* lot of its proprietor) was finally exempted from cess-payment. Consequently neither in the one case nor in the other did the privileged position of a servitor with regard to his service find corresponding expression in his position with regard to his *landownership*. Nevertheless, as time went on, service became inseparably bound up with land. That is to say, service liability came to fall upon individuals in mere virtue of land tenure alone: with the result that along with *paying* land there appeared *service* land—or, in other words, paying land became, in the hands of a member of the servitor class, also service land. This union of service with real estate brought about a dual change in *otchina* proprietorship. Not only did the right of acquiring *otchini* become restricted, and the number of persons who possessed that right reduced, but limitations were placed upon the right of *disposing of* such estates. As soon as military service became obligatory upon individuals in virtue of land tenure, there arose an idea that he who served should own land; as also (a natural corollary to the first idea) that he who owned land should serve. During the appanage period the right to own land had belonged to all the free classes in the community without exception, but in time the growing prevalence of the second of the above ideas led to landownership through personal right of *otchina* becoming the peculiar privilege of the official class alone. Consequently, with the sixteenth century the Muscovite Empire ceases to furnish any instances of *otchinniki* not belonging to the State service class of the community. Even ecclesiastical *otchini* which were the property of Church institutions, and not of individuals, rendered service to the State through their Church servitors, who acquired *pomiestia* of those institutions exactly as State servitors acquired them of the Government. Consequently, he who owned land through personal right of *otchina* had either to serve the State or to cease to be an *otchinnik* at all. Likewise restrictions became placed upon the right of *disposing of otchini*. Inasmuch as service liability fell upon *otchina* proprietorship as much as upon *pomiestie* tenure, only he could own an *otchina* who was physically and juridically fit for the performance of military duty, whether personally or through armed dependants. In other words,

the reason why the law began to restrict the right of disposing of *otchini* was that it sought to prevent such estates both from passing into hands incompetent to perform service and from passing out of hands competent to perform that duty. That is to say, the law's object was to prevent the decline of service efficiency in families of the official class. These restrictions struck a blow both at the right of alienation of and at the right of bequeathal of *otchini*—more especially of *otchini* which were inherited, not acquired—and attained further development in two laws of 1562 and 1572, whereby the right of a service prince or boyar to alienate his *otchina* either by sale, exchange, or any other process was practically annulled. Nevertheless in certain cases *otchinniki* were permitted to sell a given portion or portions of their family patrimony, provided that such portion or portions did not exceed one-half of the whole. Later this concession was limited by the grant of a certain right of pre-emption to the vendor's relatives—a right which is to be found additionally defined in the *Sudebnik* of Ivan IV., as well as in certain *ukazi* supplementary to that code. Those ordinances enacted (1) that alienation of a family *otchina* was in all cases to be subject to the tacit consent of the relatives, (2) that an *otchinnik* who sold his family estate was to forfeit any right of redemption of the same, whether for himself or for his issue, and (3) that collateral relatives who signed the deed of sale as witnesses were likewise to forfeit any right of subsequent redemption—though relatives who had not so appended their signatures might redeem the *otchina* after the lapse of forty years. Also, a relative who redeemed a family *otchina* was not to alienate it again to another family, but to transfer it, through sale or bequeathal, to members of his own family, and to no other. Upon the inheritance of family *otchini* still greater restrictions were imposed. Although an *otchinnik* might devise his estate to his direct issue (or, failing such, to his nearest collateral relatives—*i.e.* to those of his kinsfolk who stood towards him within the prohibited degrees of marriage), even this right, as well as the beneficiaries' right of legal succession, was limited to a few branches of the testator's house, and to the fourth generation at that. That is to say, a family estate was never to devolve beyond the collateral *grandchildren*. "Further than the grandchildren shall a family not devise its *otchina*." Also, though an *otchinnik* might bequeath his *otchina* (or a portion of it, if the estate were a large one) to his wife, it was to be for her

temporary possession only, as a *prozhitok* or pension, and to carry with it no right of further bequeathal on her part: the estate reverting, on her death, to the Tsar himself, "who of his treasury shall provide a remembrance for the soul of the widow."[1] Finally, a law of 1572 forbade *otchinniki* to devise their hereditary estates, "for their souls' resting," to large monasteries "where already there be many such *otchini*."

Thanks to these restrictions, *otchina* proprietorship became more and more akin to *pomiestie* tenure. It is clear that these limitations had two main objects in view—namely, to maintain the service efficiency of families belonging to the official class, and to prevent the passage of estates into hands incompetent for, or unused to, the performance of military duties. Indeed, the latter of these objects is directly stated in certain sixteenth-century *ukazi*, which justify their imposition of restrictions upon the bequeathal of *otchini* by the consideration that "it is not meet that there be default of service, or that lands do pass from service." Thus the first direct result of the development of the *pomiestie* system was that *otchini*, like *pomiestia*, ceased to be private, absolutely-owned estates, and became conditional, obligatory properties.

At the same time, it would be wrong to suppose that such limitations upon rights of *otchina* proprietorship were the outcome of *pomiestie* tenure alone, since the sixteenth century saw at least a considerable number of *otchini* belonging to princely recruits in the service of Moscow subjected to the action of another condition in restriction of those rights. This condition owed its origin to the fact that the last swift stages in the Muscovite absorption of Rus caused the service princes and a notable proportion of the service boyars to effect a hasty realisation of their estates,—a movement wherein considerations of State on the part of the Muscovite Government and industrial motives on the part of the service landowners played about an equal share. The result was that numerous old-established *otchini* —properties inherited from fathers and grandfathers—disappeared, and were replaced by *otchini* either recently purchased or obtained through exchange or (most frequently of all) awarded in return for past service. Thanks to this movement, the original juridical idea of the personal, the civilian, *otchina* which had developed during the period of the disintegration of Rus into appanages, or else, descending from an even

[1] See Chapter XI.

earlier age, had failed, owing to the later prevalence of family ownership, to strike deep root in the community, sustained a further blow through the fact that in 1572 there was passed a law whereby boyaral *otchini* of ancient standing were, in future, to be differentiated from *otchini* "of Imperial granting," and the latter to be subjected to the condition that, in the event of the owner of such an *otchina* dying without issue, the subsequent procedure observed with regard to his estate was to conform to what might be specified in the charter of conferment. That is to say, if the charter secured the *otchina* to the boyar with a right of bequeathal to his wife, such was to be done; but if the charter secured the *otchina* to the boyar *personally*, the estate was to revert to the Tsar. Clearly this latter condition had an internal connection with *pomiestïe* tenure, and owed its origin to solicitude for the service of the State, while both the one and the other condition led to the *otchina* becoming, not a private, absolutely-owned estate, but a conditional, obligatory property.

The second direct result of *pomiestïe* development was an artificial increase in private landownership. Nevertheless, though we know that members of the service class had awarded them an immense amount of fiscal land in the form of *pomiestia*, our knowledge of the history of Russian landowning does not permit of our determining the exact quantitative relation of *pomiestïe* tenure to *otchina* tenure, whether in the sixteenth century or in the seventeenth. We can only conjecture that, by the close of the sixteenth century, *pomiestïe* tenure had come greatly to exceed tenure through right of *otchina*, since, even in localities where the latter might be supposed to have been long and actively increasing, it seems, during the first half of the seventeenth century, to have given place almost wholly to the former. For instance, registers of the district of Moscow for the years 1623–24 show us that no less than 55 per cent. of the local land then held by servitors of the State had been allotted to *pomiestchiki*. Taking this *datum* as our guide, let us try to make a fancy estimate of the quantitative relation which we desiderate—an estimate which, though devoid of any importance as an historical deduction, may yet assist the imagination to picture the approximate dimensions of the factor referred to. In Chapter VII. I cited an item concerning a force of 300,000 men who were mobilised before the walls of Staritz by Ivan IV. towards the close of his war with Batory. Probably that force included not a few *liudi datochnïe* or

"given men"—*i.e.* recruits drawn from the non-official classes: wherefore the total number may, for our purpose, be reduced by one-third. Each man-at-arms participating in a military expedition was legally supposed to own at least 100 *tchetverti* of arable land, without counting pasturage, while at the same time we know that very few of the provincial nobility then possessed *otchini*, and that even the nobility of the capital were not over-rich in that respect. Consequently we may take it that, of the minimum area of 20,000,000 *tchetverti* of arable land which may be attributed to the 200,000 men-at-arms massed before Staritz, *pomiestïe* land formed considerably over one-half. Hence, if we also take into consideration the then dimensions of the Muscovite Empire, as well as of the total area of virgin spaces which it then contained, we shall be able to form a good idea, on the basis of the above estimate, of the relatively enormous quantity of real estate suitable for *pomiestïe* settlement which, even before the close of the sixteenth century—*i.e.* even before much more than a hundred years had elapsed since the inception of the *pomiestïe* system—had passed into the hands of the official class.

Also, it might be well to attempt an estimate of the amount of peasant labour employed on that vast aggregate of service property. Kotoshikhin does not give us even an approximate calculation of the number of *krestiané* employed by the State servitors of his time. All that he says is that on the lands of some boyars there stood 10,000 peasant homesteads, and on those of others 15,000, or even more. Nevertheless some of the figures which he adduces may at least help us to elucidate the point on our own account. According to him, the reign of Alexis saw few fiscal and court lands remaining: on the former of which he conceives there to have stood about 20,000 peasant homesteads, and on the latter about 30,000. All the rest of the settled portions of the country were in private possession. To individual ecclesiastical owners he attributes 35,000 homesteads, and to monasteries 90,000. Consequently, seeing that from registers for the years 1678–79 we perceive that the total number of peasant homesteads amounted, at that time, to 750,000, or a little more, we have but to exclude the 175,000 ecclesiastically-owned homesteads to which I have referred to obtain the figure of 575,000 as the number of homesteads then in the hands of the official class at large—over 75 per cent. of the whole area. That result obtained, it does not much matter

to us how many of those homesteads were situated on *pomiestïe* estates, and how many on *otchina*, seeing that the latter half of the seventeenth century saw completed the long and dual process of converting *pomiestïe* tenure into *otchina* tenure and of fusing the two forms of ownership. As the first cause of the conversion of *pomiestïe* tenure into *otchina* we may name retirement from service. That is to say, when a member of the official class had rendered the State good service, it often happened that he was rewarded by a grant of a portion of his *pomiestïe* (usually 20 per cent.), as his *otchina* in perpetuity, while, in other cases, power was granted to *pomiestchiki* to *purchase* certain portions of their *pomiestia* from the treasury, and to retain them in perpetuity for the same purpose. With these two methods of conversion of the one form of tenure into the other went a gradual fusion of the two. That is to say, on the one hand, the principles of *pomiestïe* tenure came to permeate *otchina* tenure, while, on the other hand, the *pomiestïe* came increasingly to assimilate the characteristics of the *otchina*. Land, as the immoveable commodity, played the *rôle* of money in respect of remuneration for service: whence the *pomiestïe* had a tendency—for all its juridical nature as a personal, temporary holding—to become practically hereditary. Under the system of allotment established during the sixteenth century it was usual for a *pomiestïe* either to be divided jointly among the sons of a deceased owner, or to be assigned only to such of his younger sons as were still in training for the service, or to be granted (for maintenance) to such of his children as were under age. Nevertheless there has come down to us a will of 1532 in which the testator requests his executors to see that his *pomiestïe* be conveyed to his *wife and son;* while in another will, of 1547, we see a number of brother-inheritors empowered to divide among themselves not only their father's *otchina*, but also his *pomiestïe*. Likewise, though the law of 1550 which allotted *pomiestia* in the neighbourhood of Moscow to a thousand picked officials[1] established it as a rule that a *pomiestïe* adjacent to the capital should always pass to a son qualified for the service, we also meet with a case of a *pomiestïe* devolving from father to son, and thence to the widow-mother, and thence to the grandson. With the opening of the seventeenth century, again, we meet with *direct* bequeathal of *pomiestia* to wives and children, as their permanent *otchini*, while in Tsar Michael's time it was enacted that, in the

[1] See p. 126.

event of a *pomiestchik* dying without issue, his *pomiestïe* should pass to his family in general. Hence Michael's reign saw the wholly non-*pomiestïe* term of "*rodovia pomiestia*"[1] first appear in *ukazi*. In addition to bequeathal, there arose, and was facilitated by the law, a system of *exchanging pomiestia*. Next, it was made legal to transfer a *pomiestïe* either to a son-in-law, as a marriage gift, or to other relatives—even to outsiders, provided that such assignees undertook to support the retiring *pomiestchik* during the remainder of his lifetime; while in 1674 a *pomiestchik* who desired to surrender his property was conceded the privilege of selling it outright. Thus to right of *pomiestïe* usage (all that *pomiestïe* tenure originally conceded) there gradually became added certain rights of *disposal* of the estate, while at the same time this legal approximation of the *pomiestïe* to the *otchina* was accompanied by a total abolition of all distinctions between the two forms of tenure in the ideas and practice of *pomiestchiki* themselves. Lastly, in the eighteenth century it was enacted, both by Peter the Great and by the Empress Anne, that a *pomiestïe* might become the absolute property, the devisable *otchina*, of its holder, while, simultaneously, the term *pomiestchik* acquired the meaning of an agrarian proprietor belonging to the order of nobility,—thus finally supplanting the term *otchinnik*, and affording clear evidence that *pomiestïe* proprietorship had become the predominant form of agrarian tenure in the Muscovite State. Hence, but for the *pomiestïe* system as a natural industrial revolution, there would never have arisen that multitude of private proprietors which we find in Russia of the eighteenth century. In that respect, indeed, the *pomiestïe* system had, for the nobility, the same importance as the *Polozhenïe* of 1861 had for the serfs, notwithstanding that the system of tenure which the latter established was *artificially*, rather than *industrially*, created, at the time when the State handed over to the peasant communes, on right of absolute proprietorship alone, the huge area of land which it did.

The third direct result of *pomiestïe* development was the creation of district associations—local agrarian corporations—of the nobility. Often it is mistakenly supposed that these associations were the outcome of legislation of the *eighteenth* century (in particular, of legislation by Catherine II.). As a matter of fact, it was in the *sixteenth* that local circles of gentry began to be formed, at a time when the town

[1] i.e. *pomiestia* of kindred, or ancestral *pomiestia*.

magnates and "sons of boyars" of districts were periodically convened for inspection, for the allocation of *pomiestïe* lots, and for the payment of salaries. If this function was held locally, and not at Moscow or some other specially selected point, the servitors of the given district would assemble in their local capital, where they began their proceedings by choosing from among themselves certain *okladchiki* or "reporters"—*i.e.* ten, twenty, or more servitors of acknowledged ability and standing. These *okladchiki* were required to swear upon the cross that they would, in all things, make true and fair representation, on behalf of their fellows, to the government authority who was to hold the inspection or to make the award of *pomiestïe* lots, and then to post that authority on all such questions as who was what by *otechestvo* and service; who possessed what *pomiestia* or *otchini;* who was competent to perform what kind of service (whether regimental, campaigning, infantry, cavalry, garrison, or siege service); who possessed sons, and how many of them, and of what age; how each man performed his duties; whether he always brought with him the officially required number of armed and mounted dependants; and who was "slothful in service through poverty, and who was slothful without the same." Also, from the time when the State servitor class acquired monetary salaries the servitors of each district took to binding themselves together in a common guarantee. Usually each member of the rank and file was guaranteed "in service and in money" by some one *okladchik*, so that each *okladchik* had under his warranty an associated band of guaranteed subordinates who constituted his detachment or troop. Occasionally the guarantee took a more complex form: one *okladchik* guaranteeing three or four servitors, and each of the latter doing the same by three or four others, until the chain of guarantors had come to embrace the whole body of servitors in the district. Probably propinquity of residence played a large part in the links of this chain, just as probably it did in the case of guarantees given by *okladchiki* alone. That is to say, the chain of guarantors did not so much constitute a *circle* of sureties (as in the peasant communes of later days, where each man guaranteed all the rest) as a *linked line* of them, with the links disposed according to military and agrarian standing. Finally, district associations of nobles took an active part, through their deputies, in local government. The deputy of such an association was known as a *gorodovi prikastchik* or town overseer, and was elected by a "college"

of nobles, drawn, by ones and twos, from each quarter of the district. Representing, therefore, the local military-agrarian community, the *prikastchik* was charged with the duty of seeing both to the defences of the local capital and to the payment of the dues and taxes incident upon land tenure and connected, directly or indirectly, with the defence of the local capital and its attached garrisons. These dues and taxes he duly assessed, collected, and allocated, while he also superintended the construction and repairing of the fortifications in his district, the provision of warlike stores, the appointment of *pososhnïe liudi* or staff officials, and so on. Likewise he acted as the nobles' assessor before the tribunal of the *namiestnik* or Tsar's viceroy, even as a number of selected *starosti* (wardens) and persons known as *tsielovalniki* acted in a similar capacity on behalf of the taxpaying portion of the local community. Also, when required, he served both as *locum tenens* for the *namiestnik* in his (the *namiestnik's*) judicial and police functions, as official custodian of all disputed property, and as upholder of the rights of the landowners against any encroachments thereon by the *namiestnik*. In short, it was his duty to supervise such current affairs of the local administration as in any way concerned the local nobles or the local service landowners; so that his office amounted practically to that of president of the local nobility. In time these associations of nobles acquired such political influence that they were able to present corporate petitions to the Tsar, to send their *okladchiki* to sit on Pan-Territorial Councils, and to negotiate directly with the central Government on behalf of the requirements of their district. Thus service and the agrarian tenure with which it was bound up served to form ties creating and strengthening local circles of nobility.

The fourth direct result of *pomiestïe* development was the rise of a new *stratum* in the official class—a *stratum* to which we might give the title of the service-landowning proletariat. In proportion as the official class increased, an increasingly heavy strain became put upon the agrarian resources of the Government. For this there were several reasons. The first lands to be absorbed by *pomiestïe* allotment were (1) court lands—a class which hitherto had lain at the absolute disposal of the Tsar, for the exclusive needs of his establishment—and (2) *otchini* which, for one reason or another (*e.g.* through confiscation), had lost their proprietors. The next lands to be devoted to *pomiestïe* purposes were "common" or fiscal lands, the income from which had hitherto

been devoted to general requirements of State. The cause of this transference of public lands to private ownership was that, as a means of supporting the service class, the *pomiestïe* replaced the old *kormlenie* or post which had perquisites attached: though here and there we find agrarian registers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries forbidding such and such lands to be converted into *pomiestia*, on the ground that the *korm* or income from the same was the exclusive prerogative of the *namiestnik*. The exploitation of both classes of lands was only very partial—a fifth part of them, at most, being devoted to husbandry, for the reason that agricultural labour found it an almost impossible task to cope with the forests and swamps with which they were covered. Likewise, the geographical distribution of lands suitable for *pomiestïe* allotment did not invariably conform to the strategical purposes for which the *pomiestïe* system was designed. Though primarily a man-at-arms, the *pomiestchik* was also the master of an estate, and therefore required land not only accessible and productive, but also more or less settled, if he was ever to procure a sufficiency of peasant labour for the exploitation of his domain; two advantages which, in those days, were seldom to be found conjoined on lands situated on or to the northward of the Middle Oka. That is why *pomiestïe* donations so rarely corresponded to *pomiestïe* lots, and why documents of the later part of the sixteenth century furnish numerous instances of novices performing several years' good service, yet still remaining *pomiestïe*-less, for the reason that there was no suitable land for them to apply for, or to which they could be posted. Indeed, towards the close of the century the need of suitable land became so pressing that Fletcher makes special reference to the complaints which it evoked. The result of the inevitable and increasing curtailment of *pomiestïe* donations which this shortage entailed was that by the end of the sixteenth century there remained only small *pomiestchiki* whose lots, for the most part, fell far short of the agrarian standard[1] appointed for the furnishing of one properly mounted and accoutred man-at-arms, since lots now averaged only from 40 to 80 *tchetverti* apiece, and donations from 6 to 20 *tchetverti*—estates about equal to a peasant's holding! Thus there came into being a multitude of poor provincial gentry who possessed very small *pomiestia*, or else none at all. Registers of district nobility of the sixteenth century which contain records of answers

[1] See p. 128.

returned by *okladchiki* to government inspectors[1] furnish striking evidence of the ever-increasing poverty of the *stratum* to which I have given the name of proletariat landowners. For instance, many *pomiestchiki* possessed not a single peasant homestead on their estates, but lived in complete isolation in their own: whence the later term and class of *odnodvortsi*, or one-homesteaders. Consequently these registers represent *okladchiki* as informing the Government that such and such a "son of a boyar" "is in need, doth not serve, hath defaulted in service, and doth proceed on service afoot"; that such and such another one "is needy, performeth no service, hath defaulted in the same, and possesseth not the wherewithal to serve: wherefore he hath no *pomiestie*"; that a third "is needy, and liveth in the town, near the church, where he standeth as chaunter in the choir"; that a fourth "serveth not, hath no surety, and declareth his *pomiestie* at fifteen *tchetverti*"; that a fifth "hath fallen a beggar, and doth proceed from house to house"; that a sixth "hath been dwelling among the *krestiané*, beyond Protasova, and hath declared his *pomiestie* at forty *tchetverti*"; and that a seventh "is a *muzhik*, and hath been dwelling with Frolov, among his servingmen: wherefore the boyars have considered the same, and have commanded that he be absolved from service."

The fifth direct result of *pomiestie* development was the deleterious effect which it exercised upon certain classes in the Russian community, owing to its tendency to sap the growth of towns and town industries. Although, in the sixteenth century, the districts of the Centre and North show numerous instances of towns possessing a large burgher and trading population, such a population becomes scarcer and scarcer as we look southwards; until, in the towns adjacent to the Steppes, as well as in those of the Upper Oka and the Upper Don, we see no burgher *stratum* at all, but find those towns to be purely military, fortified settlements which contained only men-at-arms of different grades. Even at a later stage, when the southern frontier had advanced much further into the Steppes, we can trace only a sluggish percolation of a commercial-industrial element into the towns of that region. The truth is that, by diverting the bulk of the State servitors from the towns to the country, the *pomiestie* system deprived urban industrial workers and handicraftsmen of their best and most lucrative customers, since the majority of servitors became so occupied with the setting in order

[1] See p. 141.

of their new *pomiestia* and *otchini* that they had no time to visit the towns, and so were forced to train their own handicraftsmen, and to have everything procurable on the spot. Consequently urban traders, artisans, and workmen lost a whole class of bespeakers and consumers: which furnishes at least one explanation of the extraordinarily slow and painful growth of Russian towns and town industries during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, both in the southern regions of the Oka and in the more central districts of the Oka and the Volga.

The sixth and last direct result of *pomiestïe* development was an important change in the position of the peasant population. It must be remembered that the conquest of Kazan and Astrakhan opened up enormous additional expanses of virgin land to Russian agricultural labour, and that, according as those outlying regions of the Empire expanded, there became built in them new lines of defence to which servitors were transferred from the towns of the interior, and around which they acquired *pomiestia*. To settle these virgin estates of theirs, such servitors sought to recruit *krestiané* as their tenants and labourers, while, the more to increase the denudation of the old central provinces, there continued in progress a ceaseless exodus of peasantry in quest of new "black" or loam lands. Thus the middle of the sixteenth century found the Government forced (owing to police and financial considerations) to impose upon peasant migration a series of restrictions. "Old cesspayers" who possessed a regular domicile and were entered in agrarian registers as responsible occupiers (*liudi pismennïe* or "listed men") were forbidden to remove to other agricultural holdings, while such of them as had already done so were commanded forthwith to return to the settlements which they had quitted. This was not a *personal* confinement of the peasantry, but a police attachment of them to the place of their domicile—two things which, as we shall see presently, were by no means identical with one another, but, on the contrary, mutually exclusive. At the same time, the peasant *dvor* of the period was a very complex one, since a peasant occupier who figured on the registers as responsible for the payment of the tax incident upon all homesteads usually had living with him, and covered by the tax which he paid, not only his children and his unattached brothers and nephews, but also one or more *zachrebetniki* or lodgers—persons described as "men who paid not cess, nor yet were listed." It was these lodgers, in particular, that new *pomiestchiki* set them-

selves to recruit as tenants and labourers for their estates. Yet, inasmuch as persons of this kind had never been anything more than hangers-on, they usually arrived at their new habitations with empty hands—*i.e.* without either the capital, the stock, or the appliances for farming. The majority of them settled upon *pomiestia* situated on a narrow strip running southwards from the Middle Oka, and bounded by the first and second lines of defence, or else they penetrated to the regions of the Bwistraia Sosnia, the Upper Oskol, and the Upper Donetz. Thus there became converted into independent homesteaders a multitude of *zachrebetniki* who hitherto had lived as tax-free lodgers. In other words, the growth of the *pomiestïe* system in the new country of the Steppes led to a breaking up of the old peasant *dvor* of the central provinces, and to the simplification of its composition. Yet whence did the new *pomiestchiki* of the Steppes derive the means for setting up these homeless immigrants in business? We have seen that, under Vassilii III., State servitors received a periodical salary, but that during the fifties of the sixteenth century, when the abolition of the old *kormlenia* had deprived the servitor class of one of its most lucrative sources of maintenance, new and (apparently) higher salaries became the rule. Now, registers of the latter half of the century in question show us that salaries of servitors varied in inverse ratio to the *accessibility* of their immoveable property. Consequently *pomiestchiki* dwelling in the outlying regions of the Steppes must have received monetary remuneration at a comparatively higher rate than did landowners inhabiting the more settled districts of the interior. In particular, we have at our disposal certain sixteenth-century registers of five districts situated on, or to the southward of, the Oka (namely, the districts of Murom, Kolomna, Kashira, Riazan, and Epifan), as well as notes of the salaries locally paid. Each of these registers, save the one relating to Kolomna (which was compiled in 1577), dates from the nineties of the sixteenth century, and from them we see that the average total sum paid simultaneously in all the five districts amounted to 1830 roubles (109,800 roubles in our own currency). Now, a law of 1555 enacted that provincial town gentry and "sons of boyars" should receive their salaries once only in three or four years, but during the latter half of the reign of Ivan IV., when almost continuous war was in progress, incessant and universal mobilisation of the military forces of the country brought about more frequent distribution

of salaries. If, then, we take the three-years' system as our basis, it will at once become apparent that the fifteen awards which (on that basis) would be distributed between the year 1555 and the close of the century in question would result in each of the five districts receiving an average total sum of 27,450 roubles (1,647,000 roubles in modern currency): and inasmuch as the strip of country referred to as bounded by the first and second lines of defence comprised, at the close of the century, no fewer than twenty-six such districts, the forty-five years concerned would entail as many as 716,666 ancient roubles (43,000,000 modern) being remitted by the Muscovite Treasury to *pomiestia* situated on or to the southward of the Middle Oka. Also, if we take into consideration the districts lying *beyond* the second line of defence, that sum would have to be increased by at least one-half. With the aid of such a fund, then,—a fund truly remarkable for the Muscovite budget of its day!—it was that *pomiestie* proprietors divided their virgin estates into *usadi* (farms) of from twelve to fifty *tchetverti* apiece, and planted them with colonies of immigrant *krestiané* drawn from the class referred to as "men who paid not cess, nor yet were listed." Naturally, as the outcome of the industrial and colonistic efforts of the *pomiestchiki* themselves, these farms gradually acquired an hereditary character, and began to devolve intact to the widows and minors of their owners. So, too, if those owners died on active service, did the salaries of the dead warriors. Thus we find a minor son being enjoined, on attaining his majority, "to render service from his father's *pomiestie*, and to cherish his mother." In short, these *pomiestia* southward of the Oka evince two of the most characteristic features of the *pomiestie* system—namely, marked predominance of petty proprietorship and a tendency to confirm the agrarian obligations of the *krestianin* with a personal monetary dependence upon his landlord. Indeed, the *zachrebetnik* newly arrived from a large peasant *dvor*, and converted, through the medium of a perpetual debt to his master, into an independent homesteader, cut a most hopeless figure on these virgin *pomiestia* of the Steppes, since there were no large estates in the region to preserve to him, through peasant abduction from one estate to another,[1] his right of free removal, while, if he left his homestead before he had fully worked out his contract to his landlord, there would be no one to discharge his debt for

[1] See Chapter III.

him, and he would therefore have no resource but to take to the wilds and join "the free Cossacks,"—a step for which he stood unprepared either with the necessary arms or with the necessary training to use them. Consequently we may with some reason suppose that it was on these virgin *pomiestia* lying to the southward of the Oka that the first link was forged of the chain which eventually bound the *krestianin* into serf bondage.

CHAPTER X

The question of monasterial *otchini*—The spread of the Russian monastic movement—Monasteries in North-Eastern Rus—Desert monasteries—Monastic colonies—The colonistic activity of the Troitski Monastery of St. Sergius—The idea of desert monasteries—The old Russian calendar—Old Russian hagiography—Contents and characteristic features of the old Russian *zhitia* or written lives of saints—Secular or "world" monasteries—Founders of desert monasteries—Wanderings and desert settlements of anchorites—The common life monastery.

In describing the direct results of the *pomiestie* system I pointed to one particular hindrance to its working—namely, to the lack of suitable land. This shortcoming made itself felt in two quarters of the country. In the Steppe region, where the State had need of the largest number of men-at-arms, the Government had only sparsely settled—though fertile and extensive—tracts of land to devote to the agrarian support of its servitors; while in the central provinces, where the soil, though more settled, was less fertile, the Government no longer had sufficient land at its disposal for the purpose. Here large *otchina* proprietorship by boyars and ecclesiastical bodies was the rule: monasteries, in particular, acquiring extensive estates during the period when the *pomiestie* system was in process of development, and thereby offering an additional obstacle to the Government in its work of endowing its servitors with landed property. This brought the Muscovite Government into collision with the Hierarchy, and raised the question of ecclesiastical *otchini* in general, and monasterial *otchini* in particular. Yet it was a question so bound up with a multitude of social, political, religious, and theological interests that in time it developed into a regular Church and State movement, and communicated to a whole century of our history a peculiar character. For that reason the movement had an importance in itself altogether apart from its connection with the economic requirements of the State.

Although some might wonder that monastic communities which had renounced the world and all its benefits should come to own such

an aggregate of agrarian wealth as actually to hamper the State, the conditions which made such enrichment possible are explainable by the history of the propagation and organisation of Russian monasteries. Let us, therefore, turn our attention to these two matters before going on to consider the main question of monasterial *otchini*.

Monasticism arrived in Rus with Christianity. The Metropolitan Ilarion—the first Russian to be consecrated to the office (in 1051)—remarks, in his reminiscences of the introduction of the faith under St. Vladimir, that "already there stood monasteries on the hills." Yet what monasteries he meant, or how many of them existed in St. Vladimir's time, or in what manner they were organised, we do not know. Manuscript items concerning individual monasteries begin to appear with the reign of Yaroslav I. As a rule, we note that these establishments followed the march of Christianity rather than brought the faith with them to regions to which it had hitherto been a stranger. Consequently it was in the central strip of the Russian land—the strip which embraced the Middle and the Upper Dnieper, the Lovat, and the Volkhov, where the Russian population was most dense, and where Christianity therefore encountered the fewest obstacles to its progress—that the first two centuries of Christianity in Rus saw the largest number of monasteries arise. Of the seventy monasteries known up to the close of the twelfth century this strip contained fifty. The two points most sought after by the founders of ancient monastic establishments were the two social centres which dominated the two ends of the ancient river route leading "from the Variager to the Greeks"—namely, the cities of Kiev and Novgorod. In the former, up to the close of the twelfth century, we know of fifteen monasteries, and, in the latter, of twenty: the remainder being distributed among such secondary provincial capitals of Northern and Southern Rus as Galitch, Tchernigov, Russian Periaslavl, Smolensk, Polotsk, Rostov, and Vladimir on the Kliazma. Almost without exception these monasteries arose either within the walls of the towns named or in very close proximity to them.

Yet the very fact of their figuring rather as the camp followers of Christianity than as its introducers renders the monasteries all the better *indices* for us of the currents of historical life of their day. In this regard their geographical distribution reveals certain marked differences between one century and another of primitive Christianity in

Rus. Of the twenty monasteries known up to the beginning of the twelfth century, only four are to be met with in Northern Rus (taking the latitude of Kaluga as our dividing line); while, of the fifty new monasteries built during that century, only nine occur in Southern Rus. Again, though Novgorod held priority over Kiev in the number of its monastic establishments, practically all the monasteries with which the northern city became filled and encircled were founded during the century of which we are speaking. In Smolensk also, as well as in Pskov, Staraia Rusa, Ladoga, Periaslavl Zaliesski, Suzdal, and Vladimir on the Kliazma, the advance of Christianity was accompanied by a rapidly extending circle of monastic foundations.

Having thus pointed out the manner in which the monastic movement of the twelfth century demarcated the general trend of Russian life towards the north, I will confine myself to the monasteries of that portion of North-Eastern Rus which subsequently became the Muscovite Empire, since it was in that region that the question of monasterial landownership first arose. Here the thirteenth century saw urban and suburban monasteries increase with undiminished rapidity—a sign that social centres were increasing in equally rapid proportion. Not only did the northern towns above mentioned witness a constant addition of new monasteries to their old ones, but in Tver, in Yaroslavl, in Kostroma, Nizhni Novgorod, Oustuga, and Moscow first monasteries became founded. To this increase in the number of monastic establishments the disintegration of North-Eastern Rus into appanages largely contributed, since it caused princely thrones to become established in towns where no thrones had previously stood, and the first prince of a newly-created appanage always endeavoured to embellish his capital with at least one cloister, for the reason that, in those days, no town of importance (especially if it were the seat of a princely throne) was looked upon as complete without a monastery and a cathedral.

Nevertheless the fourteenth century ushered in an important change in the manner of the propagation of the monasteries, especially in the north. Hitherto, both in Northern and Southern Rus such foundations had almost invariably arisen either within the walls of a town or very close to them. Only here and there had there sprung up a *pustin* or desert monastery—*i.e.* a cloister built in some lonely, uninhabited spot, such as the remote depths of a forest. During the early centuries of our Christian life solitary monastic habitation developed

slowly; so that, out of the hundred and odd monasteries known up to the close of the thirteenth century, not more than ten were desert monasteries—and even of those the majority arose only during the century referred to. The following century, however, saw the desert movement develop swiftly and vigorously among North Russian monastics; until the desert cloisters founded during that century had come to be equal in number (42) to the urban monasteries, in the fifteenth century to outnumber them by more than two to one, and in the sixteenth century to stand to them in the proportion of 51 to 35. Thus the three centuries named saw (so far as we know) 150 desert and 104 urban and suburban monasteries arise within the confines of Muscovite Rus.

Urban and desert monasteries differed greatly from one another, not only in their external setting, but in the social significance of their spiritual life, as well as (generally) in their origin. For the most part, urban and suburban cloisters were the outcome of pious zeal on the part of some high ecclesiastical dignitary, prince, boyar, or rich burgher—*i.e.* of men who stood apart from the life of the establishments which they founded, and who never became members of the monastic brotherhoods which they convened. Beyond building the monastery, convening a brotherhood, and endowing the institution with means for its future support, such *ktitori* or patrons did not go. Owing to the fact that, while catering for the spiritual needs of the laity, such monasteries lived in daily contact with the world, they became known as *mirskïe monastiri*, or "world" (*i.e.* secular) monasteries. Others had a more spontaneous origin, and were founded by men who had renounced the world to retire into the wilds, where, constituting themselves Superiors of the brethren whom they called together, they joined them in obtaining the wherewithal to build and endow a monastery. Such founders sometimes became anchorites direct from the world, or even before they had assumed the cowl at all (as in the case of the Abbot Sergius of Radonetz); but more often it happened that they first acquired the monastic taste in some other monastery, whether a desert or an urban (but more frequently the former), and then left it, to found, in the solitude of the wilds, a new cell of their own—thus establishing, as it were, a *colony* of monks. Three-fourths of the desert monasteries of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were colonies of this kind—establishments which owed their origin to the

secession of their founders from other monasteries. Such establishments bred in their inmates—at all events in the more receptive of them—a peculiar attitude, a peculiar view of monastic functions. In the first instance, a monastic founder usually retired into the wilds because he felt that there, and there alone, was the holy life, with its vows of isolation and silence, to be attained. Next, other seekers after the contemplative life would join him, and build a desert cell. This, again, would lead to other anchorites being attracted thither by the strictness of the life and the glamour of the idea, until, lastly, peasants would begin to settle around the spot, and, clearing the environs, to make the cloister, as it grew wealthier and wealthier, their religious and industrial centre. Thus *peasant* colonisation joined hands with *monastic*, and the lonely hut of the solitary recluse gradually developed into a busy, wealthy, and populous monastery. Yet there were cases in which there would be found among the brethren some pupil of the original founder who, true to the spirit and teaching of his master, considered the non-monastic opulence and bustle of such an establishment distasteful to his soul. Taking his leave, therefore, with the blessing of his Superior, the malcontent would set out in search of some untouched, virgin wild, where, by a similar process, he might found a new desert cell. Occasionally the founder of a monastery would himself act in this manner, and more than once. That is to say, there were cases in which a founder left two or three of his foundations in succession, to repeat, in some new fastness, his previous experiment. In this manner isolated local phenomena gave rise to a colonistic movement which, springing from several centres, penetrated, during a space of four centuries, into the remotest haunts of the bear, and sowed with monasteries the great forest tracts of Central and Northern Rus.

Some of these desert institutions seem to have been particularly vigorous centres of activity; in which regard the first place may be assigned to the Troitski Monastery of St. Sergius, near Moscow, which arose during the forties of the fourteenth century. Sergius was a great organiser of monastic establishments, since his humility, his patient consideration for the needs and weaknesses of humanity, and his tireless zeal enabled him not only to elaborate a model system of monastic life in association, but also to foster among the brethren a similar spirit of self-sacrifice and strenuous asceticism to his own.

Moscow, Serpukhov, and Kolomna all sent for him to build cloisters in their midst, nor did he lose a single opportunity of establishing a foundation where he thought one to be needed. When, in 1365, Dmitri Donskoi sent him to Nizhni Novgorod, to effect a reconciliation between the Princes Constantinovitch, the Abbot found time on the way to build a desert cell on a piece of marsh land near the river Kliazma, and, adding thereto a shrine of the Blessed Trinity, to form a brotherhood of "ancient anchorites of the desert, who did feed upon the bark of willow-trees and reap the grass of the swamp." In time Sergius' parent foundation became a colonising centre which gave birth, during the fourteenth century, to thirteen desert monasteries, and, during the fifteenth, to two. Subsequently the daughter colonies took up the work of their failing parent, and in this task the Monastery of St. Cyril of Bielozersk (an offshoot of that Muscovite Monastery of St. Simeon which Sergius himself founded towards the close of the fourteenth century) played a leading part. In all, the monasteries derived, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, from Sergius' original foundation and its colonies numbered twenty-seven desert cloisters and eight urban, and it is these establishments in particular which enable us to trace the principal currents of monastic colonisation during the two centuries in question and part of the sixteenth. If on the map we draw two lines from the Troitski Monastery one of which continues the river Kostroma to the river Vitchegda, and the other continues the river Sheksna to Bielöe Ozero, we shall exactly enclose the area over which the close of the fourteenth century saw an active movement of colonisation set in from the monasteries of the Middle Oka and the Middle Volga, as well as from the colonies of those establishments. Within that area arose scores of cloisters whose founders hailed either from the Troitski Monastery itself, from Rostov (St. Stephen of Perm was an example), from the Kamenni Monastery on Lake Kuban, or from the Monastery of St. Cyril of Bielozersk. This movement followed the rivers northwards without precise regard to geographical sequence, since it took such wide leaps as from Moscow to Bielöe Ozero, and from the latter to the island of Solovetski, where it joined hands with a similar current reaching the White Sea from Novgorod the Great. Sometimes monasteries were thrown out further in a given direction than were others of later foundation, and in such cases there

intervened between the parent foundation and its colonies, or between one set of colonies and another, fastnesses fully as desolate as the regions whither neither peasant nor monastic colonisation had yet penetrated at all. It was to these intervening spaces that monkish seceders from desert monasteries turned their steps when seeking new haunts of solitude. The same process continued during the sixteenth century—*i.e.* the process of colonies being founded by seceders from the older monasteries, and of those colonies, in their turn, becoming parent establishments.

Thus, with certain local deviations, the desert monastery movement preserved its general course towards the White Sea—towards what some of the *zhitia* of the old Trans-Volgan anchorites call the "Frozen Sea-Ocean." It was a movement which had an important bearing upon ancient Russian colonisation. In the first place, a desert monastery, with its encircling walls of wood or stone, formed an agrarian colony in itself (though one quite dissimilar from the secular or peasant colony which usually attached itself to its skirts), and its members hewed, ploughed, reaped, and tilled in precisely the same manner as did the peasantry themselves. Yet the activities of a desert monastery extended also to the population beyond its walls, and presently we shall see how such monastic settlements came to be surrounded by those lay or peasant settlements which formed a single parish with the spiritual brotherhood, and paid dues to the monastery's church. In later days the monastery might disappear, but the church and the peasant parish always remained. Thus the desert monastery movement was a movement of future rural parishes which, in most cases, were the first to be formed in their district. In the second place, wherever monks went, there followed a peasant population, for the reason that before both parties lay a single road—namely, the road leading to the convenient wilds of the north and the north-east, where the peasant was free to clear the wilderness for the plough, and the religious was free to attain the seclusion which he yearned for. It is not always possible to determine where the one movement preceded the other—*i.e.* where the monk first attracted the peasant, or the peasant first attracted the monk; but at all events it is clear that between the two there was a connection. Consequently, the routes adopted by the desert monasteries may be taken as indicating the otherwise unknown routes followed by the peasant population.

Before inquiring into the nature, rise, and organisation of desert monasteries, as well as into the conditions of their agrarian enrichment and the reason why the question of the secularisation of monastic lands ever came to arise, we must make ourselves acquainted with the chief source of our knowledge of Russian monasticism—namely, old Russian hagiography. At different times the Russian Church has canonised her more pious ascetics, and set aside days in their honour. Twice during the reign of Ivan IV. the Metropolitan Makarius convened councils of the Hierarchy, for the purpose of awarding festivals to thirty-nine Russian saints whom the Church had added to the twenty-two hitherto figuring in the Russian calendar. With regard to the social position of those beatified, it may be remarked that among them we meet with sixteen princes and princesses, one boyar, three Lithuanian martyrs in the service of Olgerd,[1] fourteen higher dignitaries of the Church, four *urodivïe* or imbeciles,[2] and twenty-three founders or superiors of monasteries. The names of those of the last-mentioned class of saints who were canonised between the Makarian Councils and the institution of the Holy Synod occupy an even more prominent place in the Russian calendar, since, out of a total of 146 saints so created, they number 74, or just over one-half.

The object of our old Russian hagiography was to perpetuate, through *zhitia* or written lives of holy persons, the memory of native Russian devotees of more than ordinary sanctity. Not all of these memorials have come down to us, since many of them had only a local circulation, and have since become lost to the literature of Russian ecclesiastical history; while those of them which have survived (though rarely have they been published) are mostly to be read in a multitude of versions,—a sign that they were favourite subjects for perusal in ancient Rus. To explain this multiplication of versions we must look to the peculiar literary features of hagiography.

All of us evince a more or less marked tendency towards intellectual creation—a tendency which finds its expression in a desire to generalise such phenomena as we observe. The human soul grows uneasy at the

[1] See vol. i. pp. 278 and 287.

[2] Persons who either suffered from, or pretended to suffer from, weakness of mind, or bodily defects, or both. They were held in such superstitious reverence that even the Tsars themselves did not dare to rebuke them, while in a few cases they were persons of genuine piety and social utility.

chaotic diversity of the impressions which it receives, and is rendered weary by their constant flow. Such a tedious, such a reiterated series of accidents do they seem to us that at length we are seized with a desire to guide them into a channel of our own making, and to impart to them a direction chosen by ourselves. This end, as I have said, we attain by *generalisation* of concrete phenomena. The process may be of two kinds. The individual who combines a series of scattered, disjointed, fragmentary phenomena into a single abstract idea or a single outlook upon the world is called a philosopher. The individual who combines impressions of life which are based upon sentiment or imagination into a symmetrical structure of images or a complete attitude towards life is called a poet. The stock of intellectual resources at the disposal of ancient Rus contained no means of developing the former, the philosophical, tendency of generalisation, while at the same time it contained a sufficient stock of material for the development of *sentiment* and *imagination*. That material consisted of the lives of Russian worthies who imitated the example of the Eastern ascetics by consecrating themselves to a warfare with the temptations of the world. For such holy persons ancient Russian society had as keen a sympathy, as complete an understanding, as those persons themselves had a whole-hearted desire to assimilate their mode of life to that of their Eastern models. Possibly both parties had an identical reason for their action—namely, that the temptations of their Russian life were elementary and rarely to be met with, and men love to wrestle with a life which is stern and insistent. Thus records of the careers of holy persons became the favourite reading of the ancient Russian man of letters. Works of this kind relate to the careers, not only of such leading personages as princes, princesses, archbishops, and so forth, but also to those of archimandrites, Superiors of monasteries, and plain monks, as well as (though more rarely) of members of the white clergy and (most frequently of all) of founders and patrons of monasteries (the latter drawn from all classes in the Russian community, including even the peasants—an instance of this being St. Antonius, founder of the Siskoi Monastery on the Northern Dwina, who began life as a bond slave, and afterwards became a *krestianin*). Those whose careers are the subject of these productions were personages more or less prominent in history—that is to say, personages who had attracted the notice of their contemporaries,

or else had impressed themselves deeply upon the imagination of their immediate posterity. Otherwise it is unlikely that we should ever have heard of them. Yet, though, in the popular recollection, they represented a congregation of supermen who had replaced the old "heroes" in whom pagan Rus incarnated its conception of the man of strength, their *zhitia* were neither biographies nor heroic *bilini*:[1] from the latter of which, indeed, they differed in that they described real, everyday existence—albeit with a fixed assortment of material, and in typical, more or less stereotyped manifestations of life. In fact, the hagiographer had his own peculiar style, his own peculiar literary methods, his own peculiar scope. Consequently the *zhitie*, or written life of a saint, constitutes a complete literary edifice which, in some respects, reminds one of an architectural structure. Usually it begins its story with a long, solemnly worded preface, in which the writer sets forth his views on the subject of the importance of the lives of holy men for human life at large. "Let not a candlestick be hidden under a bushel, but let it be set upon a hill, to the end that it may lighten all mankind"; "What though we be remiss in telling of their mighty works, yet shall their miracles cry aloud"; "The righteous do continue in life even after their death,"—with such reflections does the hagiographer prepare his reader for a right understanding of the career which he is about to describe. Next he goes on to tell in detail of the holy person's doings, and to show how from infancy—sometimes even from before his birth—the saint was predestined to become the divinely chosen receptacle of superior gifts, seeing that the career described was not only accompanied by miracles during the lifetime of the deceased, but also confirmed by miracles after his death. Finally the work concludes with a panegyric, which is usually couched in the form of an acknowledgment of the goodness of Almighty God in thus sending into the world a new beacon to lighten the road of life for sinful men. These various portions make up a solemn and reverently inspired whole, since such works were designed to be read at the all-night vigil held on the eve of a saint's commemorative feast. In fact, works of this kind are addressed rather to the suppliant in prayer than to the chance hearer or reader, inasmuch as they not only strive to edify, but also endeavour, in edifying, to convert the edificatory stage into a permanent tendency towards petitioning the Almighty. Though it is an individual personality, a

[1] Historical legends cast in poetical form.

personal life, which they describe, those entities have no value in themselves, whether as manifestations of human nature or as incarnations of the eternal ideal. No; what such a work aims at, rather, is to show us, through the medium of the individual life reviewed, that everything demanded of us by the ordinances of God has not only been fulfilled before by human agency, but fulfilled again and again, and is therefore binding on the conscience; since, of all demands for righteousness which may be made upon the soul, only the impossible imposes no obligations whatever upon our sense of duty. Thus, though an artistic production in its literary form, a work of this kind develops its subject *didactically*. It is intended to edify living persons, and therefore presents living persons as its edificatory types. It is not so much a biography as a moral panegyric conceived on the lines of one; even as the representation of the saint which figures in its pages is not so much a portrait as an *ikon*. For this reason works descriptive of the lives of ancient Russian worthies occupy a peculiar place among our sources of Russian history. The old chronicle recorded events current in the life of its country at large; legends and tales have handed down to us separate events which reacted with especial force upon the life or the imagination of the people; legal memorials (such as codes and charters) formulated general norms of law, or established private judicial relations which arose out of those norms. It is only in the Russian *zhitie*, in the written life of a saint, that we can observe the *personal* life of ancient Rus, even though such a work is directed to a particular ideal, and written around a type from which the hagiographer has striven to eliminate all those petty concrete happenings of personal existence which usually communicate to the biography, pure and simple, its freshness and colour. His stereotyped details on the subject of the divine upbringing of the holy personage, and of the latter's warrings with devils in the wilderness, are mere necessities of the hagiographic style, and in no way constitute actual biographical *data*. This the hagiographer is at no pains to conceal. Knowing, very likely, nothing of the origin and early days of his saint, he, in many cases, begins his story with some such frankly worded *formula* as the following: "Yet from what city or hamlet, or from what forefathers, this enlightener of men proceeded we know not. Unto God be it known, while for us it sufficeth to know that he was a citizen of the Heavenly Jerusalem, that for his father he had God

Himself, for his mother our Holy Church, for his kinsfolk the nightly tears and prayers and endless sighs of the brethren, and for his neighbours the tasks of the desert which know not satiety." Yet the actual date of the holy man's assumption of the vows was generally known to the hagiographer—whether through oral tradition, or through the written testimony of witnesses, or through personal observation. In many cases, indeed, the writer had stood sponsor to the saint, or had "poured water upon his hands"—*i.e.* had shared the same cell with him, as his lay brother. Consequently, despite the writer's respect for the memory of his dead preceptor, we not infrequently perceive glimmering through the strict conventionalities of hagiographical exposition the fascinating outlines of a real and living personality. Finally, the lists of posthumous miracles which we frequently find appended to such works possess, in cases where the saint had been an inmate of a desert monastery, the greatest value for the recorder of history, since they practically constitute local chronicles of remote corners of the land which have been left untouched by general chronicles or other records. Not infrequently these *appendices* were compiled (under the superintendence of the Abbot and the brethren), not by the author of the *zhitïe*, but by some other writer appointed for the purpose, and are generally accompanied by lists of the persons healed through the agency of the saint's miracles, the evidence of witnesses to the same, and accounts of the particular circumstances of each marvel; until the whole bears the appearance rather of a budget of actuarial documents, a *dossier* of formal legal statements, than that of a literary production. Nevertheless such compilations shed abundant light upon the conditions of their little world—of the little world which resorted with its needs and its sicknesses, its family dissensions and its social disorders, to the grave or mausoleum of the saint.

Of the question of how far the old Russian monasteries answered to the original idea of Christian monasticism, or of how far they were influenced by the Greek monasteries of the period when Rus first adopted Christianity, I will not speak, since those are special problems of Russian ecclesiastical history. Instead, I will touch upon the conditions which contributed to the growth of monasterial landownership. In this connection it is important to consider *how* and *where* monasteries arose. We have seen, in part, *how* they did so. For example, some superior hierarch—a Metropolitan or an archbishop—would build

a monastery, to serve him as a place both for occasional rest from his pastoral labours and for final retirement when those labours were done. Again, a ruling prince would embellish his capital and principality with monastic establishments, either in order to create "sanctuaries" for the neighbouring population and at the same time have a permanent body of divines at hand to intercede for himself, his family, and his relatives, or because he felt an obligation to fulfil some special vow made in a moment of difficulty, or because he wished to celebrate the memory of some fortunate occurrence which had happened during his reign. Again, a boyar or a rich merchant would found a monastery as a place where, with the greatest advantage to his soul, he might hope to offer praise and prayer during his lifetime, and to repose after his death. The church and cells duly built, and the brotherhood convened, the founder would next proceed to secure their common upkeep upon immoveable properties, or upon means for acquiring the same. In the fifteenth century a certain Svöezemtsov, a boyar of Novgorod and a rich landowner, built a monastery near a township situated on some estates of his near the river Vaga, and himself became an inmate of his foundation under the name of Vaarlem.[1] Before doing so, however, he assigned to the monastery some valuable lands which formed part of his *otchina*, and also inserted into his will a clause that every year, on the anniversary of his death, the brethren should provide a substantial meal for all such poor persons as were in the habit of attending the church of the monastery on festival days; after which the tables were to be taken outside the building, and again loaded with grain-stuffs and baked meats. Sometimes a monastery would be built through the joint efforts of a whole community, urban or rural, for the reason that an institution of that sort was a necessity alike to a town and to a country district—a necessity both as an asylum where the inhabitants might take the vows in their old age and as a resting-place where they might arrange for the "ordering of their souls"[2] after death. From a foundation-charter of 1582 we see that on the Northern Dwina, near Kholmogori, there stood a monastery which is described as a "needy" establishment, but of which it was commonly said by the neighbouring peasantry that, though its property consisted only of fourteen small villages, the institution had been built, and had

[1] See vol. i. p. 321.

[2] For an explanation of this term see next chapter.

had its villages "let and bought unto it," by their fathers and forefathers alone, who thereafter had bequeathed the building to their posterity "for vows and commemoration." The monastery and its endowments were managed by the peasants themselves, and all the income therefrom retained in their hands.[1] The sixteenth century, again, saw a monastery built to which we might apply both the term "provincial" (as connoting "pan-provincial") and the term "secular." It was an establishment which owed its origin to the fact that one day the Abbot Trifon (a religious of the province of Perm) heard that the adjacent rich and populous province of Viatka possessed no monastery; whereupon he was seized with a desire to provide it with that means of spiritual salvation. Accordingly he proposed to the leading men and judges of Viatka that, as an experienced builder of cloisters, he should take the matter in hand. To this they joyfully assented, and he at once set out for Moscow, to beg of the Tsar that a monastery might be built "for all the towns" (*i.e.* for all the province) of Viatka. Before long, however, the Viatkans began to cool a little in their enthusiasm, and ceased to help Trifon; whereupon a *voievoda* of the province named Ovtsin came to his aid. On the first day of Eastertide Ovtsin invited Trifon and certain of the provincial magnates and rich men of Viatka to a sumptuous feast, and when everybody "was in merry heart," he called upon all present to offer to Trifon such assistance as their means allowed. To this the guests cheerfully assented—and in a trice "one a ready writer" made his appearance with a subscription-book. First of all Ovtsin put down his name for a substantial sum, and then some of the guests followed suit. This hobnobbing with the *voievoda*, and enjoyment of his hospitality, was kept up for two days—as also was the circulation of the subscription-book: with the result that there were collected over 600 roubles, or 30,000 roubles of our own money. Likewise, Trifon's personal efforts at Moscow succeeded in procuring for his monastery "both villages and hamlets, together with the folk of the same," not to mention a number of lakes, fisheries, and pasture lands.

Those brethren whom the founder of a secular monastery engaged specially for the performance of its church offices ranked as *hired*

[1] The endowments referred to would consist of entry fees and donations for commemorative masses, and would be applied to the acquisition of immoveable property of varying quality and productiveness.

religious, and received "service" pay from the monastery's exchequer; while contributors to that exchequer were able to regard their establishment as an almshouse where their donations purchased for them a right to "food and rest" for the remainder of their lives. Nevertheless, it sometimes happened that aged persons who retired to a secular cloister for relief from the cares of this world found it none too easy a matter to comply with the rules of a strict monastic *regimen*: so much so that when, in one instance, the founder proposed to introduce new rules of this kind into his routine the monks tearfully represented to him that the practice of such regulations was beyond their powers. "These brethren"—so the founder afterwards explained the matter to himself—"are settlers and old men who have not alway been accustomed to the order of life of true monks, but have grown to years in simple customs." In the pan-provincial monastery of Viatka to which I have referred even worse happenings took place, for Trifon introduced a rigorous *régime* under which the monks were forbidden to drink wine when dining alone in their cells, but restricted to its use solely when dining at the common table. At length the brethren—who, like the majority of inmates of the richer monasteries of the period, could ill brook severity on the part of their Superior—rose in open revolt, and, cursing Trifon to his face, shut him up, beat him, and, finally, expelled him from the institution.

For the essential idea of true monasticism, therefore, we must look to the desert monasteries, the founders of which assumed the cowl at the call of an inward motive, and usually in early manhood. Although old Russian *zhitia* adduce many different conditions (some of them very characteristic ones) as governing the origin of solitary asceticism in ancient Rus, the actual course of training of desert anchorites was a more or less uniform one in its method. The future founder of a desert monastery prepared himself for his work by undergoing a prolonged period of probation—usually in a desert establishment, and under the direction of an experienced Superior, who, in most cases, had been the founder of the monastery. There the novice passed through various monastic offices, beginning with the most menial, and preserving always a strict vow of abstinence,—"mortifying the flesh all his days, and watching and praying all his nights." In this manner he acquired the first and fundamental requisite of a monk, namely, renunciation of his own will and unquestioning obedience. Yet it sometimes

happened that, while passing through this initial school of physical toil and moral self-abasement, the young ascetic would give rise to gossip among the brethren, or to murmurings minatory to the peace of the establishment (one *zhitie* very truly remarks that "murmurings in the desert do differ in nought from seditious clamourings in the city"). If that was the case, the novice had no choice but to leave the cloister when his training was completed, and to seek seclusion in some other part of the wilds—a course which usually met with the Superior's approval, since heads of desert monasteries customarily encouraged those of their pupils in whom they discerned signs of exceptional spiritual force to seek the wilderness when their term of probation was ended, in order that a new desert cell might arise there. The reason of this was that the desert cloister was recognised as the most perfect form of monastic life in association: wherefore the founding of such an institution was looked upon as the highest achievement to which a religious could attain. Yet our old Russian *zhitia* are not wholly explicit as to the *practical* motives which inspired this view —whether it was a longing for spiritual salvation, or the natural desire of a monk conscious of his own strength to possess an establishment of his own (thus becoming a teacher rather than a pupil), or an insistent impulse to escape from the calls of society. We have seen that the fourteenth century ushered in an active monasterial movement northwards across the Volga. The reason of this is plain—namely, that in those days the north was the only quarter of Rus where full facilities for monastic seclusion were to be had, and where few occasions of friction between landowners and peasant communes were likely to arise. Yet thither tended also a movement of *peasant* colonisation: wherefore the monk and the *krestianin* became fellow-travellers—sometimes abreast of, and sometimes behind, one another: and inasmuch as the motives for monastic seclusion which I have instanced were not necessarily such as would be mutually exclusive of, but might succeed or become merged with, one another (according to local circumstances), it would appear (and certain of the *zhitia* would seem to confirm this) that, in many cases, the main object of anchorites in building desert churches and cells was to provide the peasantry then roaming the Trans-Volgan wilds with establishments to which they could resort for prayer, or for the taking of the vows, or for the burial of their dead. This connection between peasant colonisation and the

monastic movement towards the wilds stands out clearly in old Russian hagiography. For instance, we read that the Abbot Dionysius, of the Kamenni Monastery on Lake Kuban—a religious who, during the closing years of the fourteenth century and the opening years of the fifteenth, lived the solitary life in a remote fastness on the river Glushina—continued to build chapel after chapel "for the assembling of Orthodox Christendom" and "for the reason that there were not churches in those parts," and that those shrines afterwards became surrounded by a multitude of small settlements. In the same way, it chanced that, when roaming the wilds of Bielöe Ozero, a monk named Feodor discovered, near the mouth of the river Kovzha, "certain places which were fields newly-ploughed," and, having begged them of the reigning appanage prince of those parts (as well as certain pasture lands and fisheries adjoining), proceeded to build a monastery which soon became the resort of the local peasantry for prayer and the assumption of the cowl.

Yet it was not invariably the case that an anchorite went straight from the monastery where he had been trained to the desert fastness where he intended to found an establishment of his own, since many religious began their career by wandering about from monastery to monastery. Thus Paul, a pupil of St. Sergius of Radonetz, and a devotee who took the vows at the early age of twenty-two, spent no fewer than fifty years in visiting one cloister and another before he finally decided to found a cell of his own on the river Obnor. This peripatetic system attained wide prevalence among North Russian monastics, and is referred to in clear outlines in some of the *zhitia*. Occasionally the wanderer left his original monastery without the knowledge of his Superior, for the purpose either of studying the customs of other monasteries or of paying his respects to the holy places of the Russian land. Cyril of Novöezersk accomplished his peregrinations barefooted and subsisting on a diet of pine-bark, roots, and grass; yet "he did live twenty years with the wild beasts" before finally making up his mind to halt and build himself a cell in the neighbourhood of Bielozersk (1517). To discover a spot "far removed from men" was the anchorite's chief care, and for that purpose fastnesses beset with "black forests, morasses, mosses, and thickets not to be traversed" seemed the most desirable. When he had selected his "pitch," he usually constructed for himself a small cell or hut of earth;

though Paul of Obnor lived three years in the hollow of an old lime-tree, and Cornelius of Komel took possession of an abandoned robbers' hut. Yet it seldom befell that the recluse remained long undisturbed in his retreat, since sooner or later he would be unearthed by peasantry of the neighbourhood, or by other anchorites who had made their home in the Trans-Volgan forests. Thereupon fresh cells would spring up beside his own, for the accommodation of such of the visitors as desired to share his life, and in time a complete desert brotherhood would become formed.

In ancient Rus there existed three distinct forms of monastic life—namely, common life, separate life, and solitary life. A common life monastery was a monastic association wherein property was indivisible, the management collective, the fare and dress uniform for all, and the tasks equally distributed among all the brethren. That no inmate might look upon anything as his own, but must possess all things in common, was the essential rule of such a community. To take the third, the solitary, form of monastic life next, only those consecrated themselves to it who wished to withdraw into the wilds for total abstinence, silence, and isolation. It was accounted the highest stage attainable, and could be compassed only by those who had already achieved monastic perfection in the school of common life. As for separate life, it usually preceded the last-named form, as a preparatory stage thereto; and inasmuch as it was widely prevalent in ancient Rus (being the simplest form of monastic renunciation), it assumed more than one shape. Sometimes a band of men who had renounced, or who intended to renounce, the world would build themselves cells near some parish church, and engage a monk to act as their spiritual director, yet in no way cease to live on individual lines and independently of any regular rules. Such an *osobniak*, as it was termed, constituted, not a brotherhood, but an association in which the connecting ties were merely propinquity of residence, a common parish church, and (though this was not invariably the case) a common confessor. Again, sometimes anchorites would settle in the wilds in bands of two, three, or more devotees, and build themselves separate, though adjacent, cells—thus forming small *colonies* of religious. After a while these ascetics would be joined by some recluse of stronger character and greater reputation than the rest, and then all these little scattered bands of monastics would gradually group

themselves around him, and become a compact settlement in which all tasks were performed in common, and the members assisted the Superior whom they had placed at their head in his labour of "hewing the trees and cleansing the earth for the sowing of the fruits thereof." Later, again, two or more individuals in the community would take to "eating together in one refectory" (to quote the phrase used by a *zhitïe*), and so render it necessary to erect a larger building for the purpose, and to institute a common table. In this manner separate life would often merge into common life, until at length a petition for a license to establish a monastery would be forwarded to Moscow, and (to quote the *zhitïe* of Antonius of Siskoi) "the Tsar would grant and command that his petitioners do build a cloister in the waste place and the savage forest, and do there gather together a brotherhood, and do there plough the soil." The words "do there plough the soil" clearly show that any uncleared fiscal land around the site of the proposed monastery was assigned to the brethren only on condition that they prepared it for cultivation. From the moment of such incorporation the society of the hitherto informal *osobniak* became a recognised institution, a practical juridical entity; and in the early days of the building and equipment of the monastery the brotherhood would lead a genuine life of toil, and undergo many "monastic labours," since the conditions of this particular form of monasticism required that the monks should live only by the labour of their own hands (should "eat and drink but of their own works"), and not subsist on gifts presented them by the laity. Among the founders of such desert monasteries and the brotherhoods associated with them we encounter men of all classes—nobles, merchants, manufacturers, artisans, members of the ecclesiastical community,[1] and peasants (the latter with particular frequency). A common life monastery under a Superior represented a labour republic wherein tasks were apportioned among all the citizens, each man knew his proper functions, and the labours of each went towards the "necessities of all the brethren." The rules of the Bielozerskan monasteries of Saints Cyril and Therapont which we find in the *zhitïe* of the last-named afford us a good idea of the customary distribution of monastic occupations, as well as of the "grades of each handiwork"—one brother being charged with the inscription of the registers, another

[1] See p. 105.

one with the keeping of the records, another with the mending of the nets, another with the cleaning of the cells, and yet others with the carrying of firewood and water to the bakehouse and kitchen, and with the baking and boiling of viands in the same. No matter how numerous the tasks in a desert monastery, the brethren performed them all themselves, since the day was not yet arrived when lay servants were permitted. The founder's first and principal care was to acquire the surrounding land, while the brethren's first and principal industrial task was to develop it. So long as no peasantry arrived to settle in the vicinity, the monastery worked its land with the whole of its *personnel,* headed by the founder: with the result that, in some cases, the efforts of the brethren came to be more strenuously directed to the bringing of an untouched wilderness under the plough and the axe than to any other pursuit, and schemes for solitary monastic seclusion only too frequently ended in the formation of monastic companies designed primarily for agrarian exploitation. The cause of this falling away from the monastic ideal was the connection between *monastic* colonisation and *peasant.* That is to say, the anchorite preceded or followed the peasant in the latter's wanderings over the Trans-Volgan wilds, and, in return for serving (through the common life monastery) the religious and industrial needs of the vagrant *krestianin,* ended by impressing him into his service through the medium of enrolling him in a brotherhood. The same cause (with other conditions) contributed to a yet further decline from monasticism of which I will speak in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XI

Methods of monasterial acquisition of agrarian wealth—Monasterial "lands of Imperial granting"—Donations for the repose of souls—Monasterial entry fees—Adverse effects of monasterial landownership upon the monastic ideal — Monasterial banquets—Decline of monastic discipline — Losses incurred by the State and its servitors through monasterial landownership — The question of the monasterial acquisition of *otchini*—Nilus Sorski and Joseph of Volokolamsk—The Church Council of 1503—The literary polemic over the question of monasterial landownership—Legislative attempts to check the agrarian enrichment of the monasteries.

We have seen the manner in which the old Russian common life monastery became an agrarian corporation. Next let us see the manner in which it became a great landowner.

The *zhitie* of the founder or Superior of an old Russian desert cloister shows us the holy man only at moments in his life when he was closely approximating to the monastic ideal. Yet documents are extant in which we see him also in his daily routine, and surrounded by all the *minutiæ* of everyday existence. In those records he figures principally as a steward solicitous for the daily bread of his brethren. For example, the middle of the sixteenth century saw settle on the southern shores of Lake Ilmen an anchorite named Anthony, a former magnate of Tver. There he was joined by other anchorites, until, towards the close of the century, a monastery arose on the spot. Now, although the *zhitie* of this good man portrays his life as ordered on the usual lines of strict desert seclusion, certain actuarial documents of his monastery make it equally clear that he paid great attention to the agrarian organisation of his establishment. For instance, we find him complaining of being so hampered by the estates of certain neighbouring *pomiestchiki* that he had nowhere to turn the monastery's cattle out to graze: wherefore he not only obtained the grant of certain pasture lands which had been abandoned by their peasant proprietors, but also "took from under the cess, and for ploughing and the putting forth of cattle," certain fiscal lands which had been left undeveloped by the *pomiestchiki* to whom they had originally been

allotted. To these properties (which he formally bound himself to cultivate, and to resettle with peasantry) we find the term applied of "lands of Imperial granting." Though the desert monastery was the rival both of the service landowner and of the cesspaying peasant, it was so with this important difference—that it knew better than they did how to secure its hold upon lands which it acquired. The method of annexation may be seen from the following instance. In 1618 a monk of Troitski, named Trifillion, joined a peasant, named Ivashka, in petitioning the department of fiscal lands in Moscow for a license to lease and take over a certain forest tract known as Pelegovo (a region described as "far from men," and situated to the northward of the river Unzha), for the purpose of building a desert monastery. A six-years lease having been conceded them, they further bound themselves "to build a desert cloister" within the period stated, "to add thereunto a chapel, to gather together a brotherhood and diverse peasantry for the ploughing, to hew the forest, to till the demesnes appertaining to the cloister, and to possess all the chattels[1] of the same." Likewise they covenanted that, from the time when the original lease should expire, they would begin to pay the Treasury such an annual sum as, in modern currency, would amount to about ten roubles. Nine years later the lessees transferred their establishment to the Troitski Monastery, which at once proceeded to exact from the peasantry of the local *volost* or rural commune an undertaking that they (the peasantry) would engage in no disputes concerning the land with the new cloister, nor yet call the cloister "our own building." That done, the new establishment lost no time in dividing its estates into holdings, and settling peasants on them; after which it proceeded to annex a strip of land which divided its estates from the lands of the *volost* just referred to, and to "build homesteads thereon, and to call together *bobili*."[2] In other words, it entered upon a process of wholesale encroachment upon the lands of its neighbours. The State was never loath to lease large tracts of forest country to founders of desert monasteries, since such a course led to those tracts becoming opened up to popular settlement and exploitation. Thus, at the close of the fifteenth century the Monastery of St. Paul of Obnor obtained a grant of the "black and untilled" forest of Komel—an

[1] *Ugodia*, or grazing and timber rights.
[2] Non-arable landholding peasants.

area some eight versts by three or four. Again, in 1559 the successor of a monk named Ephraim (who had founded a monastery on the Upper Volga) was granted a charter empowering him "to hew the forest from the cloister, to lodge men on the waste land around the same, and to plough the soil on every side for a space of five versts." Again, in 1546 a monk named Feodor built a desert monastery in the wild forest region between Vologda, Kargopol, and the Vaga, and was subsequently accorded a license to clear and to settle all land within a radius of *twelve* versts of his establishment. Roving grants of this kind were usually accompanied by the concession of liberal juridical and tenant rights to the peasantry who chanced to settle on the estates conferred: for which reason peasant settlement thereon proceeded apace. When, at the close of the fourteenth century, the Abbot Paul entered upon his life of solitude on the river Obnor, not a single lay dwelling stood within many versts of his little cell: yet when, in 1489, the monastery into which that cell developed received a grant of thirty square versts of the forest of Komel, we read that the *ukaz* of conferment also ordained that "from the *four villages* which do pertain unto the Monastery shall taxes not be taken." Finally, after a further lapse of fifty-six years we find the forest lands which had been conferred upon the monastery comprising as many as *forty-five old and new villages and hamlets* which the monastery itself had established! Yet such liberality on the part of a pious Government often combined with the indeterminate character of the agrarian relations of the period to offer to the growth of monasterial landownership a certain amount of opposition. For instance, the landowners and peasantry of a given district would say of the founder of a new monastery in their vicinity: "Behold, here is a monk lodging himself nigh unto us! Surely little by little he will begin to take unto himself both us and our habitations. See how he is establishing a cloister on our lands, and how he is fashioning fields for the plough, to the end that he may possess himself of all our lands and villages which do lie nigh unto the cloister." Early in the seventeenth century a peasant named Simeon became an anchorite, and settled in a remote fastness on the river Kichmenga (a tributary of the Joug), at a spot whence the nearest peasant settlements were fully twenty versts distant. There he lived (as did all desert recluses) "in many labours and necessities, the while he hewed the forest and cleansed the soil."

Later, when other anchorites began to settle around him, he set off to Moscow, to petition for a license empowering him "to establish a cloister in the black and impassable forest, and to assemble thither a brotherhood." That license he duly obtained, together with a right to possess all the forest land which lay within ten versts of the little cell on the Kichmenga—a cell described as "of but one cubit." This caused the neighbouring peasantry to take alarm lest he should attempt also to seize the free lands which lay *beyond* that radius, and so filch from them their living: wherefore, no sooner had he built his monastery than they burned it down, and when he had built another one they came upon him, one day, when alone in the cloister, and endeavoured by prayers and threats, and even by torture, to induce him to surrender the charter which the Tsar had granted him. Failing in this, they ended by putting him to death with every accompaniment of cruelty. Tales of this sort concerning the strained relations existing between local peasantry and founders of new monasteries—relations due to the fears of the former that their lands and homesteads would be taken from them—abound in the old Russian *zhitia*. As a matter of fact, excessive piety on the part of the Government often justified those fears by conferring upon founders of monasteries—even against the wishes of those founders themselves—lands already in the occupation of, or under cultivation by, peasantry. Of this I will cite an instance. Cornelius of Komel (who founded a monastery on the river Nurma) was a strict and sincere ascetic—a man for whom the Tsar Vassilii III. had a great respect, and one who in his youth had been a servitor at the court of Vassilii's grandfather. Now, in his *zhitie* we read of the following brief conversation taking place between Cornelius and his Sovereign. "My father," began Vassilii, "I have heard that thy cloister possesseth nor villages nor hamlets. Ask of me, therefore, and I will grant unto thee such villages as thou needest." To this Cornelius replied that he had no such need, but that he desired only a grant of the forest land around the monastery, to the end that he and his brethren might "eat of their bread in the sweat of their brows." To this the Tsar assented—yet at the same time added, on his own account, the villages and hamlets originally proposed, "together with all the chattels[1] thereof," as well as exempted the inhabitants of those settlements from further payment of taxes. The charter thus

[1] *Ugodia.* See footnote to p. 170.

granted to Cornelius has survived to this day, and secures to the monastery no fewer than twenty-nine hamlets and homesteads—"demesnes of which the monk Cornelius and his brethren shall of themselves dispense and judge the dwellers in all things." Thus it was a common occurrence for an ascetic who had found his monastery too noisy a place to live in, and had therefore left it in search of absolute seclusion, to end his venture by involuntarily becoming the landlord of well-nigh a whole province, and incurring all the petty distractions of such a position.

Thus *otchini zhalovannia* or "granted *otchini*" (i.e. *otchini* obtained through solicitation of the temporal power) were one fundamental source of monasterial enrichment, and lands and villages spontaneously donated (as in the case of Cornelius of Komel) were another. Donated lands also formed part of the complex institution known as "ordering of souls"—an institution which old Russian piety (or, rather, the old Russian clergy) elaborated into a system. Of all the bygone institutions of Rus, probably no other one so well illustrates the ancient Russian's conception of Christianity. To "order a soul" meant to secure that a deceased person should have the benefit of the Church's prayers for his sins and his soul's salvation. It will be remembered that the Orthodox Catechism (in Article XI. concerning the Symbol of Faith) says of souls which have passed away in the faith, but have not brought forth fruits meet for repentance, that they may nevertheless seek to attain the Blessed Resurrection by adducing prayers presented on their behalf—more especially when such prayers are accompanied by offerings of the Holy Sacrament or the bestowal of benefactions in memory of the deceased. Unfortunately the average Russian intelligence of the day assimilated this Orthodox teaching with insufficient insight and precaution: with the result that the dogma of the efficacy of prayer for the souls of departed persons who have not brought forth fruits meet for repentance only encouraged the idea that repentance is not really an urgent matter, seeing that "for everything there is a time." This is well illustrated by a couplet in an old *bilina* which represents a Russian "hero" as preparing to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem (for the purpose of putting a decent finishing touch to a not over-decently spent life), and singing:—

> "From my youth up have I slain and robbed many;
> Yet now is it time to save my soul."

Thus the Church's sympathetic provision for those who have failed to make provision for themselves led weak and easily tempted consciences to adopt the notion that the prayers of others can purge from sin, provided that convenient means be at hand for the *purchase* of such prayers, and that those prayers be technically perfect petitions, and not rough-and-ready utterances. In this connection the monks, of course, were the privileged prayer-masters. According to ancient Rus, "the angels do enlighten the monks, and the monks do enlighten the laity." This view of monasticism grew and spread apace among the old Russian community, until it had come to prove a dire misfortune for the monastic profession, seeing that it not only disorganised its working, but likewise caused it to change its views regarding its proper functions. Monastic prayers for the dead were purchased with donations "for the salvation of the soul, and for an heritage of eternal blessings." Such donations assumed different forms, and were made in every conceivable kind of article—from Church furniture (bells, candlesticks, chalices, *ikons*, service books, and so forth) to domestic commodities (grain, cattle, clothing, or, most frequently, money or immoveable property). Likewise the "blessings" designed to be secured by these articles varied greatly. The class of donations which most closely approximated to the Church's teaching on the subject of prayers for the dead consisted of gifts made "*po dushīe*," or for the repose of souls. In fact this class represented a regular norm in the ancient Russian law of inheritance, since it was the rule for the property of a solvent testator to have set aside from it a certain portion for the purchase of commemorative masses on behalf of the soul of the deceased, even though the latter might have left no instructions to that effect before his departure, and it was therefore necessary to postulate his tacit consent as a legal presumption. To the ancient denizen of Russia it would have seemed as strange a thing for his soul to be reposing in Heaven without also being "remembered" on the earth as for a child to be roaming alone, and separated from its mother, in some lonely desert place. In time a fixed tariff of these commemorative rites became drawn up—so much being paid for a "greater requiem," so much for a "lesser requiem," so much for a plain dirge, and so forth. Commemoration by annual requiem was distinguished from "all-year remembrance in perpetuity," which cost more; while, according to the amounts or the forms of donations,

annual requiems were divided into "pulpit," "altar," "vessel," "fast day," "daily," "village," and so forth, masses. In the thirties of the seventeenth century we find the Troitski Monastery of St. Sergius demanding 50 roubles (about 500 roubles in modern currency) for each name commemorated at a "vessel" mass, while in a letter to a widowed Princess Golenina the Abbot Joseph of Volokolamsk does not hesitate to propound an original dogma of his own on the subject of commemorative donations. It appears that in the course of fifteen years the Princess had paid to Joseph's monastery (for the "remembrance" successively of her father, of her husband, and of her two sons) a sum, in cash and kind, of as much as, in modern currency, 4000 roubles, but that at length she had come to the conclusion that she would prefer to have her deceased relatives commemorated *separately* (*i.e.* not *en masse*, or in company with the souls of other deceased donors), and to have their names entered on the "all-year remembrance in perpetuity" list. To this the monastery had replied that for such special privileges she must pay special fees: and this request the Princess had denounced as "robbery." In the letter referred to Joseph rebukes this hasty expression, and adduces an exact calculation to show that, what with general requiems, dirges, and masses, the Princess had had her deceased commemorated at least six times daily (on certain days ten times), and that to sing a separate mass for each separate soul on each separate occasion would be an impossibility. Also, says he, no friar of his would sing so much as a single mass or dirge for nothing, but would require to be paid a fee of a rouble per feast day, and of half that amount per ordinary day. Lastly, names could not be entered on the "all-year in perpetuity" mass-list without the conclusion of a special *riada* or agreement, either to pay a certain annual amount of money or grain to the monastery, or to convey to the latter a village in advance.

A third source of monasterial enrichment was the entry fees paid by new inmates—fees whereby their disbursers secured for themselves maintenance for life in a given monastery. It was a source which grew in proportion as the old Russian community came more and more to adopt the custom of assuming the cowl in extreme old age or when at the point of death (since, in those days, it was thought to go in a man's favour if he renounced the world *even a moment or two* before nature had closed his eyes to it for ever). Few of our ancient Russian

rulers gave up the ghost without first of all assuming the vows, and the same course was followed, in so far as was possible, by private individuals—more especially by persons of substance and standing. Assumption of the cowl usually entailed the making of a donation that was either agreed upon at the time of assumption or covenanted for to meet such a contingency. If the latter course was adopted, the donor generally appended to his donation-deed the following condition: "If ever it shall befall that I shall will to take the vows, then shall the Abbot receive me for this my gift." Indeed, we find Joseph of Volokolamsk confessing that the successful growth of his monastery dated from the day when it first began to admit to the ranks of its "black clergy" pious princes, boyars, provincial *dvoriané*, and merchants who could afford to pay entry fees of from 10 to 200 roubles apiece; while Trifillion (whom we have seen founding a monastery in Viatka towards the close of the sixteenth century [1]) was more than once accused of demanding exorbitant *honoraria* for admission to his establishment, and refusing to accept even a poor man for less than 10 (ancient) roubles. The payment of a substantial sum on entry was looked upon as the more obligatory in that, after death, it went also to pay for commemorative rites. In his letter to the widowed Princess Golenina Joseph of Volokolamsk lays it down as a general rule that a rich man who failed to pay a proportionately rich fee on becoming an inmate of a monastery could not expect to be "remembered" after his decease. Sometimes a donation-agreement would be charged with so many different conditions that it issued as an exceedingly complex legal document. For instance, in 1568 a donor who possessed a wife and four sons presented the Troitski Monastery of St. Sergius with a small *otchina* adjacent to Moscow; in return for which the Monastery undertook "to receive him, and to grant him a cell of rest; to receive his family" (*i.e.* his wife) "into the women's cloister of St. Sergius, and to grant her a cell; and to receive, of his sons, any twain into the service [2] of the Monastery, and to grant them a homestead wherein they may dwell:" while, in the event of either of those sons subsequently desiring to become an inmate of the Monastery, the Abbot would admit him, and "apportion" him a cell. Thus a single entry fee could secure to a monastery the services of a whole family of the upper class—some

[1] See p. 170.

[2] *i.e.* armed or military service.

of its members as present or future inmates of the establishment, and others as *pomiestchiki* or military retainers. Sometimes, also, an entry fee would be accompanied by a condition that not only should the donor have his soul commemorated after death, but also that his body should be interred within the precincts of the monastery. The result of this was that some monasterial establishments became the regular burying-grounds of the great houses; successive generations of which continued to present their chosen monastery with ancestral villages, hamlets, or arable lands, as payment in advance for the "eternal repose" of their souls.

Yet not every one in ancient Rus took the same view of donations for commemoration of the dead as was adopted by the Abbot Joseph. For instance, a seventeenth-century manuscript prefaces an order of requiem composed for the Siskoi Monastery with the following injunction to the brethren: "If within your pastorate there shall die a monk or a layman who hath lived in poverty, say not unto yourselves, 'He gave unto us no gift for his remembrance, and therefore will we not remember him': for then would ye be but usurers and extortioners, and not pastors of your flock. Neither, if a rich man shall die, and give not aught unto God's Church, nor yet unto his ghostly father, but shall bequeath his all unto his carnal kinsfolk, shall ye account it unto him for a sin, but, as shepherds of the sheep of the Word, shall ye ever keep a watchful care over their souls." Yet Joseph's view was the most prevalent one, as well as one that helped to maintain a steady flow of monetary and agrarian donations into the coffers of the monasteries. The first and principal purpose to which monetary donations were devoted was the acquisition of *otchini*, seeing that that was usually the course which the donors themselves desired to be adopted: their view being that, inasmuch as donations were directly connected with commemorative rites, and monetary capital might only too easily be spent, it was safer for them (the donors) to have their gifts embodied in real estate, seeing that monasterial lands were inalienable, and bound to act as constant reminders to the monks that they (the monks) should never forget to commemorate the donors. "Thus it shall be done"—so ran, in most cases, the donation-deed—"to the end that my soul be not left for ever without remembrance." Furthermore, various monasteries of bygone Rus have bequeathed to us a large assortment of agrarian *purchase-deeds*: the

archives of the Troitski Monastery, in particular, containing a series which goes back to Sergius' immediate successor, the Abbot Nikon. Yet in many cases sale and purchase, pure and simple, either gave place to other transactions or became combined with them. For instance, there were cases in which an *otchina* was alienated to a monastery for a given sum, but only, as it were, on *pledge;* after which the pledger borrowed money of the monastery on the security of the said *otchina*, and, through repudiation of, or failure to repay, the debt, converted, *ipso facto*, the deed of temporary assignment into a deed of purchase. In the same way, there existed a system of exchanging estates between monastery and donor which virtually constituted a covert sale. That is to say, a monastery would purchase an *otchina* of small value, and then exchange it for a better one with some prospective donor, and pay the difference in cash: the amount of the latter being the difference between the two portions into which, for the purpose in hand, the net value of the land was considered to be divided—namely, the amount required to pay for commemorative rites, and the *sale price* of the land. This system of exchanging estates and adding a monetary sum to one of them had its parallel in a system whereby land was conveyed to a monastery in payment for commemorative rites, and a sum returned upon it in *change*. An *otchina* thus donated was usually conveyed to the monastery some time in advance, but strictly on condition that the donor should be permitted to reside on the estate until his death or formal entry into the brotherhood. Consequently such an estate constituted a sort of *prozhitok* or life pension, of the same temporary tenure as has been seen under the *pomiestie* system.[1] Yet, despite the fact that these transactions were founded upon general norms of ancient Russian civil law, interpolation of moral-religious motives into monasterial agrarian practice caused them to assume complex forms which would hardly have been possible in the case of non-ecclesiastical conveyancing. Of this complexity I will cite an example from the archives of the Troitski Monastery of St. Sergius—the largest and most dexterous acquirer of lands among all the monastic establishments of ancient Rus. In 1624 a widow of noble family presented the Monastery with a fine old estate of her late husband's, on condition that he and their children and relatives should be commemorated after their death; that she herself should

[1] See p. 121.

be interred in the Monastery and entered on the "all-year in perpetuity" mass list; and so on. In return the Monastery advanced the donor a large sum wherewith to pay her debts, but only on condition that if, at any future time, any member of her family should wish to redeem the estate which she had presented to the Monastery, that member was not only to repay the loan advanced, but also to add to it a large monetary donation equal to such portion of the value of the estate as was required to pay for commemorative rites. Likewise the donor was to be permitted to reside on the estate until her death; after which the Monastery was to grant to each of her serfs such a measure of poor and cess-free land—whether on the estate donated or on some other *otchina* belonging to the Monastery—as would support him and his family for life. Here we see in conjunction several juridical and ecclesiastico-religious norms—namely, (1) the donation of an estate for the repose of souls—a donation accompanied by the usual conditions, and designed to obtain the usual spiritual blessings; (2) the return of a certain sum in "change"; (3) the redemption of the donated estate, and resumption of all obligations attaching thereto; and (4) the securing of *prozhitki*, or life pensions, not only to the donor herself, but also to all her dependants and their families.

I have not enumerated nearly all the agrarian transactions in which monasteries engaged, for the simple reason that that would require a special course of investigation to itself, and has, indeed, been so investigated by M. Vladimir Miliutin, in his invaluable treatise entitled *On the Immoveable Properties of the Church in Russia*—a work published some forty years ago. Rather I am speaking of monasterial *otchini*, and of the trend of monasticism in common life monasteries towards the middle of the sixteenth century. Of monastic communities which lived by their own agricultural labours alone, and in which each of the brethren worked for all, and all for each, many, if not the majority, developed into great agrarian corporations which, while possessing a complicated agrarian system and a privileged agrarian status, indulged in many of the vanities of this world, engaged in constant agrarian litigation, and formed numerous and complicated secular relations. Surrounded by monasterial villages, hamlets, and homesteads, the brotherhood of such a monastery represented a body of black-robed landlords for whom hundreds and thousands

of peasant hands toiled, and who could pass straight from lording it over innumerable tenants, servants, and dependants to praying for the world in general, and for such of the laity as had bestowed donations upon their monastery in particular. Indeed, large establishments, such as the Troitski Monastery of St. Sergius and the Monastery of Joseph of Volokolamsk, contained many an aristocratic inmate who, derived from the ranks of the princes, boyars, or provincial gentry of the country, still harboured under his cassock the sentiments which he had imbibed in the world and the customs to which he had become inured as a member of the ruling class. Thus faulty comprehension of the idea of the Church's power of prayer for the dead led to an enormous agrarian enrichment of the monasteries, and, consequently, to their becoming set in a circle of contradictions from which it was impossible for them to escape. Already in the early sixteenth century (so Joseph of Volokolamsk informs us) every monastery possessed vast quantities of land which had been presented to them by princes or boyars for the "eternal remembrance" of the donors' souls. In this way the world converted communities of recluses who, in the first instance, had fled to the wilderness to escape the world's temptations into privileged, paid petitioners for its sins, while it none the less continued to obtrude itself and its laws into those communities. In this lay the chief contradiction in old Russian monasticism, and it was one which conditioned all the rest. The monk who took as the basis of his vows humility and obedience soon found himself a member of a corporation which exercised despotic sway over a multitude of agrarian tenants; while, despite the fact that each individual inmate had consecrated himself to poverty, and had foresworn all private substance of his own, the great monasteries were exceedingly wealthy corporations. The only justification for monasterial landownership lay in the Church's *formula*, "The riches of the Church are the riches of the poor." By generously endowing the monasteries with lands, the world (*i.e.* society and the State) imposed upon those institutions the obligation of organising social charity. It is only fair to say that the early founders of monasteries—the most respected of men in ancient Rus—were fully alive to this monastic duty of theirs towards the world, seeing that the world made such sacrifices for monasticism, and that they endeavoured to meet the material needs of the people by turning no applicant away, and by feeding the hungry when the lean years

came. This was the rule of, among others, the Mónastery of St. Cyril of Bielozersk, both under its founder and under his immediate successors; one of whom is said, during a famine, to have fed more than 600 persons daily until the next harvest had been reaped. Again, Joseph of Volokolamsk, in furnishing the Princess Golenina with that estimate of the expenses of his establishment to which I have alluded, writes that every year he dispensed to beggars and travellers an annual sum of 150 roubles,[1] or sometimes more, as well as 3000 quarters of grain. In fact, he calculates the number of persons who were fed daily at the monastery's tables at from 600 to 700. Likewise we find it related in his *zhitie* that, during one season of scarcity, 7000 of the peasantry of the neighbourhood came daily to the cloister's gates for bread, and that some of the women would lay their hungry babies there, and leave them. Then Joseph would bid the cellarer collect the little ones, and attend to their wants in the monastery's guest-chamber, and distribute bread to their elders. Only a few days had passed, however, when the cellarer came to report to him: "There remaineth no more rye, and we have not the wherewithal to feed even the brethren"; upon which Joseph bid the treasurer purchase more grain—only to be met with the reply: "There remaineth no more money." In despair the Abbot commanded money to be borrowed for the purpose, and the brethren's rations to be cut down to the smallest possible limits; whereupon the monks began to murmur among themselves, and to say: "How can we feed so many folk? We shall but starve, and the people still not be fed." At length certain landowners and appanage princes of Moscow, as well as the Tsar Vassilii himself, heard of Joseph's plight, and extricated him therefrom with the aid of generous contributions. On the other hand, many of the monasteries either forgot the charitable injunctions of their founders, or else so neglected to organise their beneficence that the casual, haphazard doles of their inmates resulted in the creation of a class of professional mendicants. Likewise, few monasteries of the day maintained almshouses; and when, at a sitting of the Council of the *Stoglav*,[2] the Tsar raised the question of homeless beggars,

[1] About 9000 roubles in modern currency.

[2] A Commission appointed by Ivan IV. to inquire into the government of the Church in Rus. Its findings were embodied in a report known as the *Stoglav* or "Book of a Hundred Chapters."

paupers, and cripples, the reverend fathers of the Council—though advising that persons of this kind should be collected into poorhouses, and maintained partly out of the Imperial treasury, and partly out of offerings of the faithful—had not a word to say concerning any participation in the work by the *Church's* institutions. What, then, became of the vast store of money which poured into the coffers of the great monasteries from donors and the huge monasterial estates? Anti-monastic writers of the sixteenth century persistently maintain that ecclesiastical establishments broke the Church's laws by discounting bills and engaging in usurious business generally—above all things, in advancing loans to their peasantry. Vassian Kossoi pictures the monasteries of his day as ruthless money-lenders who, after piling interest upon interest, levied distress upon the only horse or cow of the defaulting peasant, evicted him and his family from their land, and finally brought him, through process of law, to irretrievable ruin. These accusations of "many takings of usury from poor folk" found partial support also in the Council of the *Stoglav*. To the Tsar's question, "Is it pleasing unto God that the treasures of the Church and of monasteries be given on usury?" the fathers of the Council replied with a pronouncement that episcopal bodies and monasteries were at liberty to lend their tenants money, provided that no interest was exacted, and that no other purpose was sought than to enable the peasantry to retain their holdings, and so prevent the land from going out of cultivation. Thus to the agrarian enrichment of the monasteries was partly due the fact that monastic communities which had taken the vow of poverty began to be converted into money-lending offices.

In nothing do we see this contradiction—the contradiction between the agrarian aggrandisement of the monasteries and the monastic vow—more clearly and succinctly illustrated than in the monasterial *kormi* or commemorative banquets—functions which, constituting an institution in themselves, were founded both upon age-long custom and upon a certain contract basis. The making of a large agrarian donation for the repose of a soul was usually accompanied by a condition that the monastery should provide its inmates with an annual banquet in remembrance of the soul for whose repose the donation had been made. Sometimes this banquet was given *twice* yearly—both on the "remembrance day" of the soul concerned and on the anniversary of the donor's own decease. Thus these functions would appear to have

formed a regular part of the Church's commemorative system, and in more than one instance we find an *otchina* being devised to a monastery on condition that there should be taken from it, in *lieu* of tithes, "such a measure of *table provender* and money" as would suffice to pay for "the remembrance" of the testator. Commemorative banquets were divided into "greater," "lesser," and "little" feasts, according to the class of requiem to which they corresponded: a document of 1637 showing us that, at the Troitski Monastery of St. Sergius, a "greater" feast cost as much as 50 roubles (500 roubles in modern currency). In addition to these annual commemorative banquets, a certain number of *occasional* feasts were held, on days either when some noted personage was visiting the monastery for the purpose of attending a *Te Deum* in his honour or of fulfilling some vow or when a benefactor simply desired to "regale" the brethren—*i.e.* to entertain them to a festival repast, and to confer upon them a *milostinia* or *largesse*. On such occasions the donor of the entertainment furnished all the necessary provisions out of his own pocket: wherefore men of small means were unable to organise such "regalings." For instance, we read of one young nobleman at the court of Vassilii the Dark debating within himself whether or not he should vow to entertain the numerous brotherhood of the Troitski Monastery of St. Sergius, and eventually deciding in the negative, after it had occurred to his mind that to fulfil his vow would mean the expenditure of half his fortune. Again, to ordinary banquetting days must be added the name-days of the Tsars and prominent persons, as well as all festivals of the "Greater Saints." These numbered some forty in the year, and, like the "remembrance days," were marked by the granting of a richer table to the brethren. The *korm* differed from the ordinary, everyday meal of the brotherhood in that, on such occasions, the quality of the food was improved, and the number of "eatings" (dishes) increased. Instead of black bread made of rye, the inmates were given white bread made of wheat, while the items in the bill of fare were augmented in number from two to three or four, and partaken of "twice in the day, with fish." Lastly, *kvas*[1] of honey or rennet was drunk, instead of "the simple *kvas* of the brethren." In some monasteries special "books of the feasts" were kept, in which we see recorded not only all the commemorative or gala banquetting days in the year, but also specifications of the bills of

[1] A liquor usually made from rye-malt.

fare for each separate occasion, and lists of donors who had undertaken to furnish feasts on given dates. In a year-book of this kind which belonged to the Monastery of St. Joseph of Volokolamsk and dates from the early sixteenth century we find no fewer than 51 days set apart for these commemorative junkettings, while in another "feast book" which belonged to the Solovetski Monastery and may be ascribed to the times of the Tsar Alexis[1] we come upon as many as *191* days so earmarked—more than half the year! In general, the great landowning monasteries were very precise in the fixing of their *menus*. Thus certain ordinances for regulating the fare of the Troitski and Tikhvin Monasteries which date from the latter part of the sixteenth century not only detail lists of viands for every day in the year, but also furnish specific directions as to what the monks are to eat and drink at dinner and at supper—naming, for the purpose, as many as thirty-six hot and cold dishes (of meal, fish, and other ingredients), and, to wash them down, *kvas*, mead, sour beer, and wine.

These details I have adduced in order to obviate any misconception which might arise from these documents, as well as to show that the monk who had dedicated himself to strict fasting and every kind of abstinence habitually sat down to a table which at once satisfied the exacting gastronomic demands of the day and consummated the prayers of the brethren for the soul of the generous donor. This was but one of the many contradictions in which monasteries found themselves placed by their ownership of land. Indeed, the decline of discipline in our ancient monastic establishments constitutes a phenomenon which stands out sharply in all the literary memorials and State documents of the sixteenth century. It was the result of a change in the *personnel* of the monasteries; which change was, in its turn, the result of monasterial landownership. Originally the anchorite who founded a cell in the wilderness was joined only by persons who desired to share with him the privations of his desert life and to "save their souls." To such persons the anchorite would address the stern question: "Are ye able, and are ye willing, to endure the labours of this place—both hunger and thirst and all manner of tribulation?" When St. Sergius, in particular, received an answer in the affirmative to this inquiry he would continue to the newcomers: "Know ye, therefore, what awaiteth you here. Be ye ready to endure poverty and

[1] 1645-1676.

misery and affliction and all manner of want and necessity. Prepare ye, not for ease and quietness of heart, but for labour and fasting and every kind of temptation and wrestling of the spirit." Such men came to Sergius with empty hands, and with no donation to bestow, even as Sergius himself had first sought his retreat. Contrast with this the speech addressed by the brethren of Volokolamsk (all of whom had been large donors to their monastery) to their Abbot, Joseph, when he was thinking of abandoning his establishment and its ever-growing opulence. "Behold, for thee did we leave our hearths, and for thee and for this habitation did we give of our substance, in the hope that thou wouldest grant unto us rest until the hour of our deaths, and remember us after that we be gone. Yea, whatsoever of strength there was in us, all of it have we spent in labouring for thy monastery. Yet, now that our substance and our strength be fled, thou art mindful to leave us, and to send us forth with naught!" The more an Abbot was venerated, the more did donations from the laity pour into his coffers; while, the larger the number of *agrarian* offerings included among those donations, the larger the number of persons who sought, not the seclusion and privations of the desert, but the bustle and luxury of a monastery. The result was that, in the sixteenth century, such persons finally put an end to the strict monastic discipline of the times of Sergius of Radonetz and Cyril of Bielozersk. Ivan IV. spoke very plainly to the Council of the *Stoglav* concerning this falling away from the monastic ideal. "In our monasteries," he said, "men do take the vows, not for the saving of their souls, but for the ease of their bodies, and that they may feast continually." To this *dictum* the fathers of the Council agreed, saving that they hardly thought it applicable to the Monastery of St. Sergius, "which is a place where marvels be wrought daily, and where guests do come and go, both by day and by night." However, they imposed no restrictions upon princely and noble inmates of the great monasteries who could afford to pay large entry fees for admission, but left their fare untouched, and even permitted, in the matter of potations, the consumption of "such *kvas*, both sweet and sour and mellow, as every man shall call for." Thus, through faulty comprehension and application of a good idea, the idea led, in its later development, to the disruption of the very monastic order which had so faultily comprehended and applied it.

Though the effect of monasterial landownership upon the interests

of the State and the State service class (interests practically identical with one another as regards the factor named) was less manifest than in the case of monasticism, it was none the less real. A plethora of money enabled the monasteries everywhere to raise the purchase price of land, and so to debar other competitors—more particularly servitors of small capital—from bidding for estates offered for sale. This gave monastic foundations such a predominance in the estate market that we find certain "sons of boyars" complaining to the Government that, "save for the monasteries, no man may now buy an *otchina* of another one." At the same time we have seen the agrarian transactions in which the monasteries were enabled to engage through application of their systems of "change" and "exchange" to lands donated for the repose of souls. Again, superabundant piety on the part of donors often entailed loss upon legal heirs, and so led to the creation of odium. For instance, a donor would bequeath his *otchina* to a monastery with no other end in view than to ensure "that it do pass not unto my nearest kinsfolk," while another donor would endeavour to debar his relatives from exercising their right of redemption by attaching to the land such an inflated redemptory value as would make its recovery forever impossible. Again, we find a testator bequeathing the whole of his property to a cloister, and leaving his wife no other support than a mere request to the brethren that "ye do apportion unto her such a moiety as God, reverend sirs, may inform you." A particularly pathetic case is that of a widow, with two little boys, who, in 1580, devised her *otchina* to a monastery (the estate was a bequest from her late father) on condition that her own and her father's souls should be "remembered." In the donation-deed she prays the Archimandrite and the brethren "to be pitiful, nor to drive away these my little ones from their home." In such ways the service *otchina*—formerly an *auxiliary* only to the *pomiestie*—kept passing from service hands into those of the monasteries; until, to maintain the military-administrative efficiency of its servitors, the Government found itself forced to compensate the service class for this leakage of *otchini* by awarding it larger *pomiestie* lots and increased salaries. Also, to arrest—or, at all events, to regulate—the transference of lands from service to non-service ownership, the Government devised regulations whereby monasteries were henceforth forbidden to purchase or to take in pledge *otchini* belonging to servitors of the State.

Another difficulty which monasterial landownership entailed upon the State and the State service class was this—that, just as peasant tenants of fiscal lands usually saw their holdings pass into the possession of a new monastic foundation which arose in their midst (we have already noted their anger and alarm on such occasions), so the local landowners generally had to witness the passage of *their* lands also into the grip of the new monastery. Yet, owing to their habit of exacting extensive privileges for themselves in the matter of dues and taxes, the monasteries seldom failed to settle their vacant estates with peasantry—either by leasing them to *krestiané* attracted thither from fiscal or seigniorial estates in the neighbourhood, or by inducing excesspayers to leave their communes or the *pomiestia* of service landowners, and to come and live cess-free under the monks. Thus the middle of the sixteenth century saw monasterial landownership attain proportions most embarrassing to the State. An Englishman then resident in Moscow writes that in Muscovy the number of monastic establishments drawing large incomes from land had now become so enormous that the monks owned a third of all the agrarian property in the Empire (*tertiam fundorum partem totius Imperii tenent monachi*). This, of course, was only a bird's-eye estimate, not one based upon statistics; yet certain fragments of registers which have come down to us seem to show that, as regards the country as a whole, it was an estimate not far wide of the truth, and, as regards certain localities in particular, an estimate closely approximating to it. Some monasteries were particularly wealthy. For example, in 1582 the Monastery of St. Cyril of Bielozersk owned no fewer than 20,000 *dessiatini*[1] of arable land, not to mention waste land and forest, while the English Ambassador Fletcher, who was accredited to Moscow in 1588, writes that by that time the Russian monasteries had come to possess all the best sites in the Empire, and that some of those establishments drew, from land alone, an annual income of from 1000 to 2000 ancient roubles (40,000 to 80,000 modern). As the richest ecclesiastical landowner in the State he names the Troitski Monastery of St. Sergius, which from its estates and other sources of revenue derived the gigantic annual income of 100,000 roubles (4,000,000 roubles in modern currency). This shows us what a huge aggregate of agrarian wealth had passed out of the independent control of the State power at a period when the active

[1] =about 57,200 English acres.

development of *pomiestïe* tenure was causing it more and more to feel the shortage of land suitable for the industrial maintenance of its armed forces.

Monasterial landownership was a doubly unfortunate sacrifice for the ecclesiastical communities to make to their faulty conception of the monastic idea, seeing that such ownership not only impeded the moral development of the monasteries themselves, but destroyed the equilibrium of the economic forces of the State. Indeed, the moral danger inherent in such ownership had long ago been foreseen, since, as early as the fourteenth century, the *Strigolniki*[1] are found protesting against the making of agrarian or other donations for the repose of souls. Of course these *Strigolniki* were heretics; yet not long afterwards we find the head of the Russian Hierarchy himself expressing doubts as to the propriety of monasteries owning villages. This was when the Abbot of a certain monastery inquired of the Metropolitan Cyprian what he was to do with a *derevnia* which had just been presented to his establishment by a prince. "The holy fathers," replied Cyprian, "have never granted it unto monks to possess folk and lands. When that monks shall become lords of villages, and shall take upon themselves the cares of this world, how shall they differ from the laity?" Yet Cyprian stopped short of the logical issue of his position, since he compromised by suggesting that the village in question should be accepted, but *managed by a layman*, who should consign all the grain and other produce therefrom to the monastery. Cyril of Bielozersk was another opponent of monasterial ownership of lands, and for a long while declined them when offered as donations. At length, however, the importunity of the donors and the murmurings of the brethren compelled him to yield on the point, and thenceforth his monastery began to acquire *otchini*. Nevertheless a doubt had been raised, and this led to opinions on the subject dividing themselves into two sharply opposed views, which, meeting in conflict, brought about such a war of words as not only threw the Russian community into agitation nearly up to the close of the sixteenth century, but left manifest traces upon the literature and legislation of its time. In this dispute two marked currents of monastic opinion are to be distinguished. In each case they had their origin in the conviction that the monasteries stood

[1] A sect holding some of the Judaic tenets: whence they came to be known also as *Eretiki Zhidovstvuishtïe*, or "The Judaizing Heretics."

greatly in need of reform. Common life had spread but slowly among those establishments, and even in such of them as were supposed to be organised on the common life principle it was alloyed with separate life. One party of the reformers wished to bring about a radical reconstruction of the monasteries on the basis of altruism and detachment from landed property, while the other party hoped to ameliorate monasterial conditions by establishing universal common life—a measure which would at least have reconciled monasterial landownership with monastic renunciation of individual property. The first of these two currents of opinion emanated from the Abbot Nilus Sorski, and the other one from Joseph of Volokolamsk.

An *alumnus* of the Monastery of St. Cyril of Bielozersk, Nilus had also spent a considerable time at the Monastery of Mount Athos, and so had had opportunities of observing the hermitages of that region and of Byzantium. Consequently, when he returned to his native land, he founded (on the river Sora, near Bielozersk) the first hermitage known in Rus. Hermitage life was an intermediate form of monasticism between common life and absolute seclusion, while the hermitage itself resembled the *osobniak*, or separate monastic habitation, in that it seldom contained more than two or three cells, and the common life monastery in that the dress, fare, and monastic routine were uniform for all. The essential characteristic of hermitage life, therefore, lay in its attitude and spirit. Although Nilus was essentially a recluse, he had a better idea of monastic life in the wilds than had the old Russian desert monasteries, and the rules for hermitage profession which he elaborated from a close study of the works of Eastern ascetics, and from observation of contemporary Greek hermitages, have come down to us, embodied in a charter. Asceticism, this document declares, is not a disciplinary restraint imposed upon a monk by set rules of conduct, nor yet is it a physical warfare against the flesh, nor yet a mortification of the body by such penances as fasting, excessive bodily toil, and endless prayers and genuflections. "Whoso prayeth with his lips and taketh no thought for the heart, the same doth pray but wind; for God looketh only to the heart." Hermitage profession, therefore, is a re-making of the inner man, a concentrated working of the soul upon itself, a "guarding of the heart by the mind" from all ideas and passions which may be wafted thither from without as arising from wayward human nature. The best weapons in the struggle are

introspection, spiritual solicitation, and silence, coupled with never-ceasing watchfulness over the thoughts. Such a struggle affords to the heart and mind nourishment which enables the chance, transient impulses of a faithful soul to coalesce into an attitude upon which the calls and temptations of life can make no impression. The observance of precepts lies not merely in refraining from breaking them in deed, but in never even conceiving the possibility of breaking them. In this manner alone can the highest spiritual condition be attained—the what the charter calls "ineffable joy" which descends upon the ascetic when, without the agency of the tongue, prayer comes wafted to the lips, and the mind, the director of the senses, loses all power over itself, and is led captive by "another's strength." "Then doth the soul pray not by asking, but doth rise above asking." Such a condition is a foretaste of the eternal felicity, and when, at length, the mind has succeeded in attaining to that condition, it forgets itself and everything else existent upon the earth. Such is the definition of hermitage "re-making of the spirit," as found in Nilus' charter. Before his death (which took place in 1508) he enjoined his disciples to throw his corpse into a ditch, and to bury it "with all manner of dishonour"; adding that neither in this life nor in the life to come did he wish to strive for honour or glory. Old Russian hagiography duly fulfilled his bequest by leaving his life and services to the Church unrecorded, but the Church has, of her own volition, added him to the list of her beatified. It will readily be understood that the movement which he initiated could never have spread far or attained much active development among the Russian community of that day—least of all among the monks. All that it could do was to gather around its expounder a small circle of sympathetic comrades and disciples, to infuse a certain vivifying influence into the literary tendencies of the day (though without effecting any change in their direction), and to throw out a certain number of brilliant ideas which, though serving to lighten the poverty of Russian spiritual life, were too unfamiliar for general acceptance. Even in his cloister at Bielozersk Nilus was never more than the hermit and dreamer of Mount Athos—the man who based his faith upon a "wise and spiritual," yet *alien*, soil.

On the other hand, it was on a wholly native and indigenous soil that his opponent, Joseph of Volokolamsk, took his stand. From contemporary writers we glean some *data* which enable us to form

a clear picture of this wholly practical, wholly positivistic, personality. Particularly in a panegyric written by his nephew and disciple, Dossithei, we see him drawn with all the exactitude and detail of a portrait —though, perhaps, in rather stilted style and somewhat far-fetched language. When passing through the stern monastic school of Paphnuti Borovski's monastery,[1] Joseph outstripped all his fellow-pupils through the fact of his combining within himself, to a greater degree than did any other inmate of the establishment, a number of different qualities of mind and body. In him keenness and pliability of intellect were united to solidity of thought, while he also possessed a gift of fluent, luminous speech, and a voice which enabled him to sing and read in the church of the monastery with all the melodiousness of a nightingale, so that every hearer was touched. No one in Rus could sing and read as did he. Holy Writ he knew by heart, and had it all at the tip of his tongue for purposes of argument, while in monasterial tasks he was the cleverest worker in the cloister. Of medium height and handsome face, with a full, yet not over-abundant, beard and brownish hair (in later days streaked with grey), he was gay and affable in demeanour, as well as sympathetic to all who were weaker than himself. Church and cell offices, prayers and genuflections, he duly performed at the appointed hours, and then devoted the rest of the day to monastic tasks and manual toil. Lastly, in eating and drinking he was always abstemious—eating but once a day, and sometimes letting a whole day pass without breaking his fast. Consequently the fame of his virtuous life and sterling qualities spread far and wide. It is clear that he was a man of order and discipline—a man who possessed a keen sense of the actualities of life and human relations, a not over-exalted opinion of his fellow-men, and a great belief in the efficacy of rules and training. In fact, he was a man who understood the needs and weaknesses of humanity better than he envisaged the higher qualities and aspirations of the human soul. He could subdue his fellows, and best instruct and direct them, by appealing to their common sense. In his *zhitie* we read that sometimes the force of his words so wrought upon the evil morals of eminent personages who came to converse with him that they began to lead better lives. "All the region of Volotz did then become inclined to right living." In the same work we find an account of the manner in which

[1] See vol. i. p. 291.

he convinced a rural nobleman of the advantage of maintaining sympathetic relations with his peasantry. A harsh landlord makes a needy tenant, and a needy tenant makes a bad workman and a defaulting tithes-payer—such was Joseph's argument. If, to pay tithes, the tenant has to sell his cattle, what will he have left to plough with? His holding will go to rack and ruin, and produce no income, and the peasant's loss will fall also upon the landlord. Wise precepts of estate-management indeed!—yet in them all not a single word concerning *moral* motives or love for one's fellow-man! Such was Joseph's invariable attitude towards men and things: with the result that, though, when he first settled in the wilds of Volokolamsk, he possessed (as he himself tells us) not a groat in the world, he succeeded in leaving behind him one of the richest monasteries in Rus. If to the foregoing we add an inflexible will and an almost complete immunity from physical fatigue, we shall obtain an excellent example of the type of monk-landowner-steward to which, in greater or lesser degree, the majority of founders of the old Russian common life monasteries approximated. During the time that a monastery was in process of equipment and, as yet, unable to boast of a mill its grain was ground by hand. This function followed next upon Matins, and was participated in by Joseph *con amore*. Once, when a visiting monk surprised him at this (for an Abbot) so undignified task, the visitor exclaimed, "What doest thou, my father? Suffer me in thy stead!"—and took his place. Next day he again found Joseph at the grindstones, and again relieved him. Things went on thus for several days; at the end of which the guest took his leave of the cloister, with the words: "Never in grinding shall I supplant that Abbot!"

At a Church Council convened in 1503 the two factions finally met and joined issue. Nilus' view of monasticism was directly opposed to monasterial landownership. Those monks wearied him, he had written, whose whole thoughts were bent upon the acquisition of wealth. It was through them that monastic life—once a thing so desirable—had become "foul." There was no getting rid of pseudo-monks, whether in town or country; so that the tillers of the soil were everywhere vexed and disturbed by seeing "these shameless rascals" hanging about their homesteads. Accordingly he now prayed the Suzerain Prince to give command that monastics should no longer be permitted to own villages, but be required to live in desert spots only, and to support themselves

solely by the labours of their own hands. Whether these things were, or were not, to be was, consequently, the question which the Suzerain Prince now submitted to the Council. First of all Nilus and his little band from Bielozersk spoke on the subject of the true function and significance of monasticism, and were followed by Joseph of Volokolamsk, who cited instances both from Eastern history and from the Russian Church, and delivered himself, among other things, of the following practical considerations: "If monasteries shall not possess lands, how shall a man of honour and noble birth assume the vows? And if there be not monks of noble birth, whence shall ye obtain men for Metropolitan and archbishops and bishops and other officers of authority in the Church? If there be not monks of honour and noble birth, then assuredly will the faith be shaken." This was the first time that such a syllogism had been uttered. Never yet had a dignitary of the Church declared it to be the function of the monasteries to train and provide candidates for the Hierarchy, or stated that a Hierarchy of noble origin was an indispensable bulwark to the faith (as was the view held in Poland). True, it was from *native* ecclesiastical practice that Joseph probably derived his first postulate, seeing that the majority of the higher luminaries of the Russian Church hailed from monasteries; but that his second postulate was a mere personal fancy, a mere personal prejudice, of his own (due, in all probability, to the fact that he came of an ancestor who had emigrated from Lithuania and become the hereditary landowner of Volokolamsk) there can be little doubt. In the end the Council sided with Joseph, and embodied its conclusions in a series of reports to Ivan III., which were drawn up with great erudition and much citing of historical and canonical justification. Nevertheless these reports also gave rise to a misunderstanding, for the reason that, though it was around *monasterial* landownership that the debate in the Council had centred, the fathers of that assembly now represented to the Suzerain Prince that it was *archiepiscopal* landowning (against which not a word had been said) that they were unwilling to surrender. The cause of this *contretemps* lay in the covert tactics of the party which had carried the day. Joseph knew that behind Nilus and his little band of zealots stood Ivan III. himself, who needed the lands of the monasteries for purposes of State. Accordingly, since those lands were not going to be given up without a struggle, the Council linked them, in its reports, to *archi-*

episcopal estates, and thus contrived to extend the question to Church lands in general. That is to say, the Council made the question a general one for the purpose of throwing obstacles in the way of a decision being come to on the individual question of *monasterial* landed properties. Ivan yielded in silence to the fathers, and thus the matter of the secularisation of monasterial lands which had been raised by the little circle of Trans-Volgan anchorites on *moral* grounds met with the tacit approval of the State on grounds of *economic need*, but had to give way to the fathers of the Council, owing to their converting the particular question into the more general (and far more difficult) one of depriving the Church of *all* her immoveable property.

After the holding of the Council the question of monasterial *otchini* became diverted from the practical ground to the less perilous one of literature, and there arose a polemic which continued in full blast until well-nigh the close of the sixteenth century. The dispute is all the more interesting in that in it there met more than one important interest of the day, while it was also one which gave occasion to many of the best intellects in Rus to express their views, as well as one which was more or less directly connected with some of the most striking phenomena of contemporary spiritual life in Rus. Yet, since it does not enter into the plan of the present work (those who wish to study its course should consult the late Professor A. S. Pavlov's valuable monograph entitled *An Historical Sketch of the Secularisation of Ecclesiastical Lands in Russia*), I will confine myself to a few of its general features. The two most prominent opponents of Joseph's party were the prince-monk Vassian Kossoi and Maxim the Greek. Vassian's writings are indictory pamphlets, pure and simple. On behalf of his master, Nilus Sorski, he depicts in clear (and sometimes exceedingly incisive) outline the non-monastic life of the great landed monasteries, the solicitude of the monks for their estates, the complaisance of the brethren towards the rich and powerful, and the venality, usury, and ill-treatment of the peasantry by which monasticism was disgraced. Indeed, in these pamphlets we hear, not merely the indignation of the desert anchorite, but also the wrath of an ex-boyar of the princely house of Patrikiev who is denouncing the men and the institutions by which boyar land-ownership in Rus is being ruined. Likewise, in the author's words we hear a certain anticipatory note of the accusations which his fellow-thinker, Prince Kurbski, was to voice at a later period—namely, the

accusations that the agrarian economy of the avaricious monks was devastating the lands of the peasantry, and that monkish teachings on the subject of the efficacy of donations for the repose of souls were having the effect of reducing the military class, the service landowners, to a plight even worse than that of the beggars and the cripples in the street. As for Maxim the Greek's contributions to the discussion, they were quite free from polemical excesses. Quietly he examines the subject in its essence, and only occasionally breaks out into incisive remarks. Among other things, he declares that Joseph's prescription for the reform of monastic life and the removal of the contradiction existing between monkish renunciation of worldly substance and monasterial wealth (namely, the prescription that in monastic life everything should belong to the monastery, and nothing to the individual monk) is as though a man who had joined a band of robbers and grown rich in their company were to say, when apprehended, "I am not guilty, in that I and my comrades have had all things in common, and that I have taken nothing from them." In short, that the relations and customs of wealth-seeking monasticism are altogether incompatible with the qualities of the true monk is the basic idea of Maxim's writings.

In those days literature had less influence upon governmental policy than it was destined to have later. In spite of all the polemical efforts and successes of the party of monastic purity, the Muscovite Government abandoned its schemes of attack upon monasterial *otchini*, and confined itself to standing on the defensive; more especially when, in 1550, an attempt on the part of Ivan IV. to seize some estates belonging to the Cathedral body of Moscow, and to turn them to the industrial use of his servitors, had met with successful resistance from the Hierarchy. At the same time, though a long series of *ukazi* on the subject and a number of discursive resolutions passed by the Council of the *Stoglav* did nothing to decide the question *in its essence*, they at least led to the adoption of certain tentative measures designed to check further enrichment of the monasteries at the expense of the servitor class—measures described as framed "to the end that there be not loss of service, and that land do pass not from service." Also, those *ukazi* and resolutions led to increased governmental supervision of monasterial incomes and spendings. At length this series of tentative measures attained its consummation in a decree issued by the Church

Council with the help of the boyars, whereby it was enacted (on January 15, 1580), that henceforth monasteries and superior dignitaries of the Church should cease to purchase, or to advance money upon, or to accept *po dushie*,[1] an *otchina* belonging to a servitor of the State; that monasteries and dignitaries should cease to seek further agrarian enrichment; and that *otchini* purchased by, or pledged to, monasteries before the issue of the present Act should forthwith revert to the Tsar, who should be at liberty to pay for them or not as he might see fit. This was all that the Muscovite Government of the day was strong enough, or clever enough, to obtain from the Hierarchy in the matter of monasterial lands.

Next we shall see the connection between this result and the subsequent fortunes of the peasantry.

[1] For the repose of souls.

CHAPTER XII

The connection between monasterial landownership and serf law—The peasantry during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—Forms of rural settlements—Relation of cultivated land to waste—Contracts between peasant and landowner—Relation of the peasant (1) to the landowner, (2) to the State—Social organisation of the peasantry—The question of the rural commune—The peasant in his agricultural industry—The subsidy, the loan, and the exemption—Peasant holdings and imposts—Conclusion.

THE connection between the question of monasterial *otchini* and the fortunes of the peasantry was a dual one. On the one hand, the fact that it was from the stock of fiscal, court, and service lands that monasterial *otchini* were formed, and that all attempts to arrest the leakage of those lands to the monasteries, and to restore them to the exchequer and to service, proved futile, compelled the Government to make good on peasant labour (through increased taxation) what it lost on monasterial ownership; while, on the other hand, the fact that the leasehold lands of the monasteries constituted a perpetual menace to the revenue-producing possibilities of fiscal and service estates (owing to the easy leasehold terms of the former luring peasantry from the latter) obliged the Government to attempt to lessen the evil by imposing restrictions upon the peasant's right of migration. Such restrictions did not, as yet, constitute serfdom, but they undoubtedly paved the way to it. In this manner monasterial landownership led both to increased taxation of peasant labour and to a diminution of its freedom; and it is in the internal connection between these two factors that we must seek for an explanation of the similarity of their external history.

Study of sixteenth-century agrarian registers reveals the following as the external setting of the peasantry of the period. Around the *selo* (the type of settlement which possessed, besides a church, from four to ten peasant homesteads, or else a seigniorial mansion surrounded by a few dwellings of church officials and church pensioners) there would be scattered a number of *derevni*, *potchinki*, and *pustoshi* (types of hamlets defined below), all of which looked to the *selo* as their religious,

administrative, and industrial centre. On the other hand, a settlement which consisted only of a church and the dwellings of a few church servers and pensioners was known as a *pogost*, while a hamlet which did not possess a church, but contained either the mansion of the local landowner or his principal estate-buildings, with a few peasant homesteads besides, was known as a *seltso*. Again, a settlement which arose on perfectly virgin ground was known at first as a *potchinok*, and usually consisted only of a single peasant homestead; but in time, when two or more homesteads had become added to it, it developed into a *derevnia*. Thus an agrarian register of the late sixteenth century describes a certain district as containing 3 inhabited and 2 empty *pogosti* (the latter places where the churches "stood without chaunting of choir" and no church servers now resided), 1 inhabited *seltso* (a settlement where a monasterial bailiff farmed 24 *dessiatini* of rough land on his own account), 111 *derevni*, and 36 *pustoshi*.

In places where the arable lands of contiguous settlements touched one another they were bound by law to be enclosed by both parties, so as to prevent overlapping. Each peasant homestead had its own portion of arable land, as well as a corresponding portion of pasture land (the amount of the latter being measured in *kopni* or ricks of hay, about 20 of which went to the *dessiatina*). At that time the three-field system of husbandry prevailed. That is to say, all arable land was divided into a winter corn, a spring corn, and a fallow field. Yet in few parts of the country was a given area under universal and simultaneous cultivation, since exhaustion of the soil and popular migration caused plots of varying size either to lie derelict for a while or to be passed over altogether. On the whole, the amount of derelict or untouched land greatly exceeded that of the cultivated, both on *otchini* and *pomiestia:* the proportionate difference being, of course, greater in the north and the east than it was in the more central provinces. All this shows us that at the period in question (namely, the sixteenth century) we have to deal with a vagrant and scattered peasant population—a population which possessed neither the means nor the inducement to settle permanently, or in large masses, in the great wilds which confronted it, but only to halt for a few seasons on a given area, and after raising from it a crop or two, to proceed onwards and repeat the operation on fresh and unbroken territory.

According to their ownership, lands tenanted by peasantry were

divided into three categories—namely, Church lands (belonging to ecclesiastical bodies or institutions), service or boyaral lands (belonging to servitors of the State), and Imperial or fiscal lands. Of these, again, the last-named were subdivided into two categories—namely, court lands (set apart for the exclusive upkeep of the Court, and constituting, as it were, its private property) and "black" or State lands (*i.e.* fiscal lands not exclusively in private Imperial possession). The difference between court and State lands was an industrial rather than a juridical one, seeing that the income from both went to the upkeep of the Court, and that it was rendered, not in money, but in kind. Consequently lands belonging to the one class were frequently transferred to the other, until the seventeenth century saw them finally assimilated, and their management combined under a single court department. Also, the Muscovite Empire of the sixteenth century contained three classes of landowners—namely, the Tsar, Church bodies and institutions, and servitors of the State. Nowhere in the Empire do we meet with any other private proprietors than these. In other words, we meet with no *peasant* proprietors. Everywhere the *krestianin* lived on land that was not his own—whether on Church lands, service, or Imperial. Not even court lands ranking as State lands were accounted the absolute property of their peasant cultivators. In fact, two habitual sayings of the sixteenth-century *krestianin* were, "What though the land be of our holding, it yet doth belong unto the Tsar," and, "Inasmuch as the land belongeth unto God and the State, naught thereof is ours but the ploughing and the rye." This affords us clear evidence that the sixteenth-century peasant-tenant of "black" lands could distinguish strictly between *right of ownership* and *right of use*. Consequently the agrarian position of the *krestianin*—*i.e.* his juridical and industrial relation to the soil—rendered him an agriculturist who worked lands not his own: which position of his gave rise to some very peculiar juridical, industrial, and State relations.

First of all, let us examine the peasant's juridical relation to the land—*i.e.* his relation to the landowner. In the sixteenth century the *krestianin* was a free husbandman who settled on land not his own by agreement with the proprietor, and his freedom was expressed in, among other things, peasant *vichod* or *otkaz*—*i.e.* the peasant's right to leave his plot or to change his landlord. Originally the law placed no restrictions whatever upon this right, but in time the nature of agrarian relations in

itself helped to impose thereon a dual limitation, as well as to restrict the landowner's free-will in his dealings with the tenant. That is to say, it came about that neither could the landowner evict the *krestianin* before the harvest was reaped nor could the *krestianin* leave his plot before he had settled accounts with his landlord at the conclusion of the season. In time, also, these natural relations of agrarian industry gave rise to a need for some uniform legal date when the peasant could change his domicile and the two parties could discharge their mutual obligations to one another. To this end the *Sudebnik* of Ivan III. fixed upon the week preceding the autumnal feast of St. George (26th November), as well as upon the week which follows that festival—though in Pskov of the sixteenth century the date more customarily observed was the Eve of St. Philip, or 14th November. However, both dates make it clear that the peasant could leave his plot only when the year's field-work was done and both parties were in a position to discharge their accounts to one another. Likewise, the freedom of the *krestianin* is seen in the fact that, when settling upon land not his own, he concluded an agreement with its proprietor: the conditions of his tenancy being set forth in written deeds, and the prospective tenant treating with the landowner as a free and juridically equal party in the transaction. From the said landowner he leased a larger or a smaller plot of land according to his means for working the same: wherefore plots varied greatly in extent. Likewise, he leased his plot in fractions of an *obzha* or a *vit*. These were units of land-measurement whereof the former was in vogue in Novgorodian territory and the North, and the latter in the central provinces of the Empire. In general, the *obzha* connoted a plot of from 10 to 15 *dessiatini*,[1] according to the quality of the soil, and the *vit* a somewhat larger amount—though it too was very variable, both for the same reason as the *obzha*, and owing to the exigencies of local custom. The normal or fiscal measure of the *vit* was, of good land 18 *dessiatini*, of medium land 21, and of poor land 24, but, as said before, there existed *viti* of greater and lesser dimensions than these. Thus the peasant leased of the landowner a given fraction of an *obzha* or a *vit*, but seldom a whole one; and the conditions of his tenancy were set forth in written deeds. At the same time, the newcomer was treated with a certain amount of caution and discrimination, and was required to furnish guarantors that he would reside "among the

[1] =from 28 to 42 English acres.

peasantry" in a given *selo* or *derevnia*, duly plough the land, stock a homestead, erect new byres, keep the old ones in repair, and undertake not to abscond. As for the guarantors, they were either his fellow-tenants or extraneous persons. If the peasant chanced to settle in a *pustosh* (*see above*), so that, at the outset, he had no ready-made homestead and broken and cultivated plot to enter into, the agreement bound him to erect farm-buildings, to break the soil, to fence-in fields, to prepare them for tillage or pasturage, to live quietly and in accordance with the law, to keep no tavern, and to refrain from all forms of larceny. If he failed to fulfil these obligations, then either he or his guarantors had to pay a *zastava* or forfeit. Next, the deed defined the various payments and dues which he was to render for the use of the land which he leased. Either he rented the land on the same terms as did the other peasants among whom he settled, or he exacted conditions personal to himself alone. On some estates all dues renderable by the peasant to the landlord were combined into a single monetary or cereal tithe, while, on other estates, payments in money and kind gave place to an obligation to perform a certain amount of personal labour for the landlord. Most frequently, however, we meet with *mixed* conditions. That is to say, the peasant was bound not only to render tithes in money and grain, but also to perform a certain amount of *izdielie* or *barstchina* (*i.e.* the stipulated labour for the landlord to which I have alluded). This conjunction of tithes and *barstchina* is to be explained by the fact that they sprang from different industrial sources. Whereas the monetary or grain tithe was only a payment for the use of another man's land, the *barstchina* owed its origin to the fact that, in settling upon another man's land, the peasant usually accepted from his landlord a subsidy (*podmoga*) and a loan (*ssuda*), and worked off the interest thereon in personal labour (usually by cultivating a given portion of the seigniorial glebe). Thus the *barstchina*, in ancient Rus, sprang from a combination of land-hire with a loan in money or kind. At the same time, this was only the *original* form of the *barstchina*, since in later days it came to form one of the peasant's regular obligations, just as the loan came to form one of the regular conditions of his tenancy-agreement. Into the amounts and forms of the peasant *obrok*, or tithe to the landlord, we will inquire when we come to speak of the peasant's *industrial* position. Meanwhile we see that, in his juridical relation to his landlord, the peasant of the sixteenth century was a free, remove-

able tenant of land that was not his own—whether fiscal, service, or ecclesiastical land.

Next let us examine his relation to the *State*. The peasantry of the sixteenth century did not constitute a class in the *political* meaning of the word, since their status was a free, temporary condition—position, rather—not an obligatory, permanent calling to which were attached rights and obligations of its own. Its essential feature, therefore, lay in its *avocation*. That is to say, a free man became a peasant as soon as he "set the plough" to taxpaying land, and ceased to be a peasant from the moment that he abandoned agriculture for some other pursuit. Consequently obligations fell from the individual as soon as he renounced the rights with which they were bound up. Yet the classes which became formed at a later period show something wholly different to this, since, in them, loss or renunciation of corporate *rights* did not also lead to the individual becoming relieved from corporate *obligations*. The peasant continued to pay cess,[1] though the land he worked was not his own, and the nobleman to render State service, though not a *dessiatina* of land stood to his name. At the same time, the cess incident upon the peasant during the sixteenth century cannot properly be called a corporate obligation of his, since, in this connection, we still see preserved those fine distinctions which, later, became obliterated with the formation of corporate classes. Although the boyar of the sixteenth century who purchased taxable land from a peasant commune had to pay cess thereon equally with the peasants, he did not himself become a peasant, for the reason that he possessed another avocation to define his social position—namely, the avocation of a military-administrative servitor of the State. In the same way, the *kholop* or slave who worked cesspaying land for a master never became a peasant, for the reason that he was not a free man. The connection between cess, status, and avocation is seen in the *Sudebnik* of 1550, which distinguishes strictly between the *agrarian* obligations of the peasant and those *personal* obligations of his which usually accompanied, *but did not condition*, his deed of tenancy. The peasant who quitted his plot at the legal autumn term for removing, and left some winter rye sown in that plot, had to pay cess on the latter until the crop was reaped: yet, during the interval between his removal in November and the close of the ensuing harvest he was not bound

[1] State taxes on agrarian labour or produce.

also to *work* for the owner of the plot, seeing that such work had been a *personal* obligation of his, and had not formed a necessary condition of his deed of tenancy. In fact, agrarian contracts were possible, and were actually made, without any such condition at all; while, *vice versa*, a *bobil* (*i.e.* a peasant holding no arable land) could be made subject to the obligation in virtue merely of settlement on a given estate. Similarly, a peasant, with his plot, could be sold into slavery at any time, whether at the legal term for removing or otherwise, and if he left any winter or spring corn sown in that plot he had to continue paying peasant cess upon it, in spite of the fact that, as a slave, he had now ceased to be a peasant at all—*i.e.* a person liable to taxation: yet no sooner did he pass into bondage than he ceased to be liable for any *outgoing rent* for the plot and the homestead which he had quitted, seeing that such outgoing rent had been only a *personal* obligation of his to the landlord, and had become extinguished by the passage into slavery. Such a significance of the *Sudebnik's* enactment is explainable by a reverse instance, which, though never added as a norm to the code, is to be found set forth in an unpublished contract concluded by a landowner with the Makristchski Monastery in the year 1532. In this case it was not the peasant who left the landowner, but the landowner who left his peasantry. At the beginning of the year an *otchinnik*, or hereditary proprietor sold his estate, with some sowings of winter corn in it, to the Monastery, but only on condition that payment of cess on the two crops should entitle him to sow *spring* corn also on the estate, as well as to remain where he was until the close of the year. Meanwhile, though the peasants were to continue working the seigniorial land under the terms of the personal agreement which hitherto had subsisted between him and themselves, he was not to exercise his seigniorial right by turning them off without first of all obtaining the Monastery's leave to do so; while, on the other hand, should any peasant leave the estate of his own accord, the outgoer was to pay quit-rent and other dues, not to the vendor (who was now considered to have lost his right to the same), but to the Monastery. Moreover, should the vendor sow August rye for the ensuing year (1533), he was to pay cess on that winter corn "only so long as the rye cometh not forth from the earth." Thus we see the State beginning to take cognisance of the peasant as a renderer of cess, a taxpayer, only when he settled on taxable land and cultivated it himself, or when he left seed in a taxable plot

which he himself had tilled. On the other hand, should he not settle on taxable land at all, nor work taxable soil, he stood exempt from cess, even as taxable land stood exempt from actual levy so long as it remained vacant or unworked. From all this it follows that, in ancient Rus, peasant cess fell, not upon peasant labour, nor yet upon land in general, but upon any application of peasant labour to taxable land.

Taxes to the State served also as the basis of the *social organisation* of the peasantry. For the payment of taxes and the fulfilment of obligations the *krestiané* were grouped into administrative unions known as *stani* or *volosti*—the difference between which we shall see later. Originally *stani* and *volosti* were identical units, since they were peasant communes united in a joint guarantee for the payment of taxes, and administered by officials known as *namiestniki* and *volosteli*, representatives of the central Government. Nevertheless these units possessed communal administrations of their own, and met in communal assemblies for the election of their own executive officials. The administrative body of a *volost* consisted of a *starosta* (or a *sotski*) and a number of *okladchiki* or assessors, who "sat together for apportionment"—*i.e.* for the equal distribution of taxes and obligations among all the members of the commune. As for the jurisdiction of such a communal administration, it comprised all matters relating to the agricultural industry of the *volost;* of which matters the most important was the rendering of taxes and obligations. Also, whenever necessary, the elected officials of a commune transacted current business "in company with *all the krestiané.*" Besides the duty of making equal distribution of taxes and obligations, the *starosta* and "brethren" (*i.e.* the *okladchiki*) assigned vacant plots in the *volost* to new settlers, inquired into and adjudicated upon claims for tax-exemption, collected and "laid upon the board" all monies paid in rent for plots, defended the lands of the *volost* from external seizure or interference, negotiated with the central Government on behalf of the *volost's* requirements, and laid complaints against the officials of that Government in cases where the *volost* was situated on "black" or State lands, and therefore had no hereditary landowner to act as its mediator. But the commune's most onerous function of all—the function, indeed, which gave rise to the joint guarantee—was the payment of taxes on behalf of insolvent or retired members. Usually a fixed, definite sum, calculated according to the

number of contributory units shown on the roll of occupied holdings, was appointed to be paid by the district at large, in general satisfaction of fiscal dues, and this sum was apportioned among all the cesspaying homesteads of the commune, in proportion to the dimensions of their respective plots. Occasionally, however, a peasant would resign his plot, and leave the commune, or else another peasant would declare himself unable to pay the amount for which his arable land had been assessed, and either remove to a smaller plot or become a *bobil—i.e.* a non-holder of arable land. In such cases the commune at large was made responsible for the contributions of the defaulter until a new distribution had been made. This system of *volost* administration existed during the appanage period, and continued in existence up to about the sixteenth century. Later, however, when the Muscovite Empire had become consolidated, and there ensued an increase of service and of monasterial landownership, the system began to die out, and with it the *volost* rural commune as an integral unit. Private landowners (such as Church establishments and service *pomiestchiki* and *otchinniki*) who, on acquiring estates from *volosti* situated on State and court lands, had hitherto been wont to pay cess thereon equally with the peasantry of the *volost* now began to demand exemptions for their property, while the local authorities of communes (*i.e.* the *namiestniki* and *volosteli*) ceased to have any jurisdiction over such landowners, or, indeed, over the peasantry of the latter save in the gravest of criminal offences: they ceased, so we are told, "to be able to send their constables against them for aught." Thus the new landowners gradually acquired rights of legal dispensation and police supervision over their *krestiané*, while in certain cases they could even relieve them of the obligation of paying contributions to their communal funds along with their fellow-peasantry of the *volost*. Likewise in time the *selo* of such a privileged landowner, with its attached *derevni* and *potchinki*, became separated from the rest of the *volost*, as a special judicial-administrative area which had an agrarian management of its own and its own seigniorial bailiff or monasterial overseer. Yet the latter still continued to act with the *starosta* and other elected authorities of the *volost*, while, *vice versa*, communal elected authorities still continued to transact the agrarian affairs of their unit in company with the landowner's agents—at all events in so far as the granting of exemptions, the leasing of lands from outside proprietors, and the confirming of

transactions on the warranty of some other landlord than their own were concerned. These seigniorial *sela*, then, came to form the new rural communes into which the older *stani* and *volosti* became dissolved. The period of this dissolution is marked by the *Sudebnik* of 1497, which treats both the integral *volost* and the fractional *selo* as separate communal units. Yet the process was by no means a universal one, seeing that only the more powerful and acquisitive of the landowners attained the privileged position necessary to enable them to sunder their lands from the main structure of the *volost*. Indeed, up to the very close of the sixteenth century we find the peasantry of the minor landowners continuing "to pay cess unto the State together with the *volost*"; and since the new private or seigniorial commune was based upon the same foundation as the older commune of the *volost*—namely, upon agrarian cess—it was undoubtedly this cess, and not land direct, which cemented both the *selo* and the *volost* into communes, seeing that both of them were rural associations for finance and tax-payment rather than agrarian units pure and simple.

Yet, it might be asked, what precisely were those communes in the nature of their land tenure, and did they in any way resemble the rural commune of to-day in their holding of lands in common? Well, the question of the origin of the Russian *obstchina* or *mir* long ago raised an animated discussion in our literature, and led to the establishment of two points of view which are maintained to this day. Some hold with Chicherin (who first raised the question in the fifties of the last century[1]) that the Great Russian *obstchina*, or rural commune, was a modern institution which acquired its final form only in the closing quarter of the eighteenth century, under the influence of the poll-tax and the attachment of the peasantry to the soil; while others follow Professor Bielaev, of our own University of Moscow, who opposed to Chicherin's view a theory that the Russian rural commune was an aboriginal phenomenon of Russian life, and that the principles upon which the communal associations of modern days were founded had been in operation since the earliest period of Russia's historical existence—since, indeed, a period previous to the coming of Rurik. To decide between these two points of view let us make ourselves acquainted with the subject in dispute. In ancient Rus the rural

[1] *i.e.* the nineteenth.

commune was known solely by the term *mir*, never by that of *obstchina*, which only began to be applied to it in the literature of the nineteenth century, as connoting the rural union compounded at the time of the Peasant Reforms and the various features peculiarly distinctive of *obstchina* agrarian organisation. The essential points which comprised the basic principle of the *obstchina* (namely, common tenure of lands) may be said to have been (1) compulsory equality of apportionment, (2) strictly corporate character of the commune, and (3) a joint guarantee. *Obstchina* lands were apportioned according both to *labour* efficiency and to *taxpaying* efficiency; so that, side by side with formal apportionment per head of population, there existed also apportionment calculated on the basis of cess. That is to say, lands were not only divided according to the personal labour efficiency of each homestead, but divided compulsorily—*imposed*, as it were, upon the recipient. The reason of this was that the measure of apportionment determined, for the individual peasant, his share of the corporate obligations which fell upon his class at large; and as soon as ever that correspondence became broken by the course of births and deaths the land was redivided, in order that the ratio might be restored. Therefore, in the *obstchina* of modern days, land was not the *source* of the peasant's obligations, but merely the means towards their fulfilment. On the other hand, in the rural communes of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries we meet neither with compulsory equalisation of plots (with periodical redivision), nor yet with corporateness of character as regards the agrarian obligations of the peasantry. The *krestianin* of those days selected his plot at will, and bargained for it—whether on State or on private property—with the owner or his representative, and in both cases without the intervention of a commune. Likewise, since the tax-liability of the free peasant leaseholder was determined by the dimensions of the plot which he leased, land served, for him, as the *source* of his obligations, not as a mere means towards their fulfilment. Moreover, plots were of a constant, fixed order, since almost always they consisted of a *derevnia* of one or two homesteads, with the *ugodia* (grass and timber rights) attached thereto—rights which for centuries were defined in the stereotyped phrase invariably to be found occurring in peasant tenancy-deeds, "wheresover the plough and the sickle and the axe may pass." Again, the peasant was not bound to his plot, nor yet to his commune, nor yet to his avocation, but

was free to change his plot, to leave the commune, or to cease to be a *krestianin* at all. As an instance of this, some tenancy-deeds of the fifteenth century show us that in the course of thirty-five years, one *derevnia* in particular had, as owners, no fewer than six landlords derived from the peasantry. Thus the rural communes of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries fail to show two of the essential features of *obstchina* tenure. Perhaps the earliest germ of such tenure is to be seen in a very rare phenomenon found in a list (of date 1592) of lands belonging to the Troitski Monastery of St. Sergius and situated near the town of Dmitrov. Yet what a feeble germ it is! When, on those estates, the peasantry had ploughed their sorry 5 (in some cases, their $3\frac{3}{4}$) *dessiatini* of land per homestead, the two, three, or four homesteads composing the average *seltso* or *derevnia* had left to them only a further area of from 5 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ *dessiatini* to "plough according unto measure and all in common"; while in one large *seltso* of sixteen homesteads the amount of arable land thus jointly cultivated comprised barely 22 *dessiatini*, or $1\frac{3}{8}$ *dessiatini* per homestead! Well might such agriculture be described as communistic husbandry on its trial! Yet the performance of agrarian obligations was sufficient of itself to teach the peasantry to look upon the land as a link binding them all together, since obligations were distributed strictly according to *viti*, and performed in common by the whole of the peasantry settled upon a given *vit* (such distribution, of course, being made by the elected officials of the *selo* or *volost*). Although the joint guarantee had a similar tendency, since it served to secure the common tax-solvency of communes, it was not a feature peculiar to communal life, since there was reared upon it (as we shall see later) the whole structure of the local agrarian administration which obtained during the sixteenth century. Yet already, at the period of which I am speaking, the guarantee was leading, if not to *periodical redivision*, at all events to *frequent division*, of communal lands. In agrarian registers of the day we find numerous instances of *derevni* comprising empty homesteads, yet not a single unoccupied plot. This means that a plot which fell vacant was either divided (together with the cess incident upon the same) among all the tenanted homesteads or assigned to one homestead in particular. In any case, nowhere in the rural communes of the sixteenth century do we meet with pure *obstchina* tenure of lands, nor yet with the obligatory apportionment of land

which went therewith, since no provision for distribution of peasant holdings then existed unless it was found necessary to secure the peasant's tax-solvency. Yet, even so, the system gradually engendered the ideas and customs which, later, and under different conditions, came to lie at the basis of *obstchina* tenure. Those different conditions were (according to Chicherin) forced labour and compulsory distribution of lands in proportion to personal labour efficiency. As early as the sixteenth century we see their action in operation, nor is it difficult to divine that that action first revealed itself, not among the peasantry (who were not yet bound into serfdom), but among the *kholopi* or slaves. For a long time past landowners had been compelling a portion of their domestic menials to work their seigniorial lands, as well as building them homesteads, fitting them out with stock, and apportioning them plots. In documents of the sixteenth century copious evidence is to be found that that apportionment was made, not by individual homesteads, but by *all homesteads in common*, and that subsequently the *stradniki* (as such agricultural slaves were called) either equalised (*i.e.* divided and redivided) the land themselves, or else shared the produce from the same according to the part which each man took in the common labour of cultivation.

Next let us enter into the *economic* position of the peasantry, and see how they fared within the narrow circle of their industry. As above stated, the peasant of the sixteenth century was a free, removable tenant of land not his own, and his freedom was secured upon a right of quittance and a right of personal treaty with the landowner. Such was the peasant's *legal* position. Yet in reality that position was, in the sixteenth century, a very different one. In most cases the free, removeable tenant arrived at the landlord's estate with empty hands—*i.e.* without either the capital or the appliances for farming—since the growth of *pomiestïe* tenure southward of the Oka and on the Middle Volga had greatly augmented the body of substanceless peasantry, and the majority of the *krestiané* attracted from the central provinces to the newer *pomiestie* estates of the regions named were unregistered *krestiané* who had hitherto possessed no establishments of their own.[1] Consequently, when settling, such peasants needed help at the outset from their landlords—more especially if they happened to settle on *pustoshi*, or plots virgin or derelict. All this

[1] See Chapter XI.

led to the assistance of the landlord becoming an almost universal condition of peasant-tenancy agreements, as well as to its assuming different forms. If, at the autumnal feast of St. George, a *krestianin* settled on a plot that was already broken and enclosed, so that he had a ready-made homestead and arable holding to enter upon, he usually received from the landlord a subsidy (*podmoga*) and a loan (*ssuda*) in money, stock, or, most frequently, grain "for sowing and for eating" until the next harvest should have been reaped. Sometimes the subsidy and the loan constitute interchangeable terms in peasant tenancy-agreements: yet between the two there was a difference. Whereas the subsidy was granted solely for the initial stocking of the peasant's farm (*i.e.* for the purpose of enabling him to erect a dwelling-house and outbuildings, and to fence in his fields), and remained non-recoverable so long as he adhered to the terms of his agreement, the loan (which was granted him either in stock, in appliances, or in money for their acquisition) was intended to help him in the *current pursuit* of his industry, and debited to him as an item recoverable on his departure. In the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries such an advance was known as *serebro izdielnöe*, or "work silver," for the reason that with it there went that *izdielie* or *barstchina* of which I have spoken;[1] while, for the same reason, the recipient was known as an *izdielni serebrianik*, or receiver of money repayable in the form of labour (to distinguish it from *serebro rostovöe*, or "interest silver"—*i.e.* money repayable in the form of produce). Hence we find landlords differentiating between "money on *sela*," "money on produce," and "money on ploughing." If, on the other hand, the peasant settled on a plot which required to be broken and enclosed before it could be used, he was granted, in addition to the subsidy and the loan, a *ligota* or exemption, which constituted a concession more or less comprehensive, and good for a longer or a shorter period, according as the plot was more or less "void" (*i.e.* fallow or waste) and therefore useable only after a longer or a shorter course of pioneer labour. This *ligota* or exemption was granted for one, two, or more years, and relieved the beneficiary both of "Tsar's cess" (*i.e.* State taxes) and of monetary, cereal, and labour tithes to the landlord—or at all events of a portion of them. Of the need for the loan in particular we may judge from individual instances. For example,

[1] See p. 201.

in 1511 a family named Alexiev—small proprietors in the neighbourhood of Moscow and Borovsk—had on loan among their peasantry a sum equivalent to 2000 modern roubles, while the condition of sixteenth-century peasant industry is still further illustrated by the abundant references to be found occurring in tenancy-deeds to peasantry who sowed their plots with seed furnished by the landlord. In an estate register of the Monastery of St. Cyril of Bielozersk (compiled during the latter half of the century, and enumerating all the Monastery's *sela* and *derevni*, as well as the several *viti* of land which the peasantry rented in each) we find an approximate total of 1500 *viti* set down as thus occupied—with, of that total, as much as 70 per cent. sown with seed provided by the Monastery itself! That is to say, the whole of that vast area of land was in the use of persons who could only afford to sow it with the help of their ecclesiastical landlord! If, therefore, we reckon the total of seed thus required (of rye, wheat, barley, and oats, as specified in the register) at the grain prices ruling to-day, we shall find that the amount distributed would, in modern currency, be worth at the least some 52,000 roubles. This seed loan was left debited to the peasant so long as he remained on the Monastery's lands, and even devolved from father to son, since it was secured upon the homestead: wherefore it constituted a perpetual debt, whereof the interest formed part of the annual estate-dues payable to the Monastery. In other words, the borrower of seed had imposed upon him the *onus* of a grain loan.

The industrial basis of the peasant was the plot of land which he tilled. In expounding the juridical relation of the sixteenth-century *krestianin* to his landlord, I said that the former bargained with the latter to rent of him a portion of an *obzha* or a *vit*, but seldom a whole one—still more seldom a plot of larger size. Consequently, to understand the conditions of the peasant industry of the period we must determine more exactly the dimensions of the peasant's holding. Such dimensions varied according to period, to locality, to quality of soil, to labour efficiency of individual homesteads, and to conditions not easily apprehended by the modern observer. Indeed, to determine the variation of plots over the entire area of the Muscovite Empire during the sixteenth century would, in view of the present condition of scientific research into records bearing upon the subject, be an almost impossible task, seeing that, though a whole series of learned scholars

has furnished (and is still furnishing) for our study a mass of archivial documents which constitutes abundant material for investigating the distribution of peasant arable tillage (*i.e.* the dimensions of peasant plots per homestead) in the different provinces of the Muscovite Empire during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it would none the less remain a difficult problem for us to co-ordinate the whole, and to attain complete deductions, since much is wanting in this mass of material which is necessary if we are to make a *comprehensive* survey of its contents. All that we can do is to limit ourselves to individual items in these documents—to greatest and least dimensions, and to conjectured averages. In them we meet with plots of 24 *dessiatini*, of 47, and of as little as 3. Under one and the same landlord (namely, the Troitski Monastery of St. Sergius) we see settled, on the same estate, a peasant renting the above large plot of 47 *dessiatini* and a peasant enjoying the use of a plot of 4½. Towards the close of the sixteenth century we note a general tendency to curtail the dimensions of holdings. For instance, though registers of the district of Tver which date from the first half of that century show plots of considerable size (*i.e.* plots of 12 *dessiatini*, or thereabouts [though in one *volost*—that of Kushalin—the average holding only attains 8½]), a register of the same district for the year 1580 makes it clear that by that time plots had come never even to attain the dimensions of *4 dessiatini*. In general, the mean size of a peasant's tillage during the sixteenth century amounted to from 5 to 10 *dessiatini*, and, towards the close of the century, to from 3 to 4½ *dessiatini*, or a trifle more in the case of the Steppe districts of the South. Yet the restlessness of the age and the extremely unequal distribution of peasant labour make average dimensions very inexact guides for us with regard to the real state of things. For instance, in detailed inventories of some estates which consisted of a *selo* apiece, with a score of *derevni* and *potchinki* attached, we see no two settlements possessing homestead plots of identical dimensions. In one *derevnia* 7 *dessiatini* form the usual plot, in another one 36, and in a third 52½. In general, study of agrarian documents of the sixteenth century leaves us under the impression that the average peasant holding was smaller than might have been expected. Were it possible to reckon homestead plots against population (always bearing in mind that the *personnel* of the then peasant *dvor* was considerably more complex than is that of to-day),

it would appear that the peasantry of the sixteenth century enjoyed the use of no more arable land—even if of no less—than was assigned to their distant descendants by the *Polozhenïe* of February 19, 1861.

A still more difficult task is it to determine the *incidence of obligations* upon the cesspaying plot. The chief hindrance to our so doing lies in their complexity. First of all, the plot had to bear State taxes, in money, kind, and labour. Secondly, it had to pay monetary and cereal tithes to the landlord, as well as sundry additional requisitions in the shape of eggs, poultry, cheese, sheepskins, and so forth. Lastly, it had to furnish *izdielïe*, or labour for the landlord. A charter granted to the peasantry of one of its *sela* by the Solovetski Monastery defines the precise tasks of which such *izdielïe* or *barstchina* was to consist. The peasants were to plough and to sow the Monastery's arable land, o keep in repair the Monastery's farm-buildings and threshing-floor, to erect new byres in place of old ones, to carry firewood and kindling to the Monastery, to furnish waggons for carting the Monastery's grain to Vologda, and to bring back salt thence. Although to a certain extent we can translate grain tithes into terms of modern currency, neither obligations of *izdielïe* nor supplementary requisitions in kind lend themselves readily even to an approximate calculation. The difficulty is rendered the greater by the fact that the ancient standards of land-measurement (namely, the *obzha* and the *vit*) were exceedingly variable, as well as not everywhere identical. Also, we are so unfamiliar with them that, unless we first of all convert them into *dvori* and *dessiatini* (a thing not always easy to do), we can form no clear idea of the incidence even of imposts reckoned by their very means. Consequently, though I may give a few *data* making such translation possible, and add to them a few figures bearing upon the agrarian obligations of the peasantry and the amount which the latter paid their landlords, I may yet be asked—Was the total amount so paid great or small according to the standards of the age? Well, the most readily intelligible means for estimating conditions of life which have long since passed away is comparison with the present. With what, then, shall we compare agrarian dues of the sixteenth century? With present-day leasehold rents? Hardly. Contemporary leasing is an act of purely civil law, whereas the peasant of the sixteenth century who rented a taxable plot of a landowner or a rural commune entered, by the very transaction, private and civil though it was, into certain definite obligations towards the State, and

took upon himself the whole burden of the State cess incident upon cesspaying land. Later, when the free agricultural tenant became a serf, State cess gave place to a poll-tax, and leasehold agreements between landowner and peasant became converted into *barstchina* and compulsory tithes to the landlord. Later still, when serf law had been abolished, serf tithes and forced labour gave place to redemptory payments and supplementary dues. Such was the sequence of historical facts, and it shows us that the only values properly commensurable in this connection are the obligations exacted by the landlord from the sixteenth-century peasant and the redemptory dues paid by the peasant who long afterwards was freed from serfdom. At all events, such an historical perspective helps us to form a rather clearer idea of phenomena bearing upon the industrial position of the sixteenth-century *krestianin:* wherefore we may now formulate our task in the question—To what extent, on the eve of serfdom, was peasant labour burdened in favour of the private landowner as compared with the burdens which, on emancipation of the serfs, the landowner left imposed upon those of the peasantry who wished to redeem their holdings? Let me begin with the simplest of relations. In the eighties of the sixteenth century certain *sela* in the province of Nizhni-Novgorod were paying their landlord a total rendering of 9 *tchetverti* (quarters) of rye and oats per *vit:* which, translated into grain values of the eighties of the *nineteenth* century (*i.e.* before redemptory payments had been abolished), works out at 2½ roubles per *dessiatina*, or a trifle more than the redemptory rate per *dessiatina* in the present-day government of Nizhni-Novgorod. Next, in 1592 a certain *selo* in the province of Dmitrov paid the Troitski Monastery of St. Sergius one rouble per *vit* of medium land (in modern terms, 3 roubles per *dessiatina*), while in certain other *sela* of the same Monastery's, as well as in the *selo* just mentioned, a few *viti* paid a monetary due and additional tolls at the rate of 2 roubles, 10 kopecks per *dessiatina*. Lastly, in other *sela* the monetary payment (of 13 roubles, 50 kopecks) had become replaced by the ploughing of 2 *dessiatini* per field per *vit* for the Monastery (*i.e.* the ploughing of 2 out of every 3 *dessiatini* in rotation—the turning over, harrowing, manuring, and weeding of *dessiatini* to form, in turn, a winter corn, a spring corn, and a fallow field respectively). Hence in old Dmitrov, the monetary tax per *dessiatina* was a trifle less than was the redemptory payment

in the present-day government of Moscow (2 roubles, 50 kopecks), while the rotatory cultivation of a *dessiatina* which, in the eighties of the sixteenth century, occasionally took the place of the monetary impost (13 roubles, 50 kopecks) cost two or three times less than it did in the eighties of the *nineteenth*, when, in the central provinces, the cost of such cultivation varied from 25 to 40 roubles per *dessiatina*. Sixteenth-century agricultural labour, therefore, was rated far cheaper than was the case with such labour three centuries later. I will adduce another example, this time from the Trans-Volgan North. In 1567 a certain servitor of the State bequeathed his *selo* of Voskresensk, in the province of Bielozersk, to the Monastery of St. Cyril, together with 47 *derevni* and *potchinki* attached thereto—the whole comprising 144 peasant homesteads. From a detailed list of the plots which went with these homesteads we see how greatly the former varied in extent. Some of these establishments possessed holdings of 22 *dessiatini*, others of 2, and some only of 1½. That is to say, the average plot was three or four times smaller than is the average plot in the present-day government of Novgorod, since the mean works out at 7 *dessiatini* per homestead, divided into three fields. Inasmuch, therefore, as the dues rendered by the local tenantry consisted of a monetary due, a cereal due, festival offerings, and tolls of 5 shocks of corn per *vit*—all of which (with the exception of the tolls, which cannot well be appraised) might be translated into a general payment per *dessiatina* of 1 rouble, 69 kopecks —we get, as our result, a slight excess over the redemptory payment in the present-day government of Novgorod. These examples are clear enough. Yet *data* are to be found which would seem to refute them. From a register of 1580 we see that, in a *selo* named Kushalin, which formed part of the Tveran court lands of the Suzerain Prince Simeon Bekbulatovitch (for a short while governor of the *Zemstchina* during the *Oprichnina* period[1]), the total monetary and cereal dues incident upon the *dessiatina* amounted to 5 roubles, 34 kopecks, or some three times greater than the redemptory payment per *dessiatina* in the present-day government of Tver. At the same time, the amount of arable land per homestead was a trifle less than 4 *dessiatini*; wherefore, if this average tillage be set against population—against the mean homestead *personnel* as shown in the

[1] See p. 81.

census returns for the government of Tver for the year 1858 (namely, 2.6 souls)—we shall get, as the result, an average of 1½ *dessiatini* per head, or an area nearly three times less than the average allotment awarded, in the same government, by the *Polozhenïe* of 1861 (while it must also be remembered that the *personnel* of the peasant *dvor* of the sixteenth century was probably a good deal larger than that of the peasant *dvor* of the nineteenth). These same court lands of Tver even contained *sela* wherein plots of less than 3 *dessiatini* (less, that it is to say, than a *dessiatina* per soul!) went to the homestead. Lastly, we meet with tenancy-agreements in which the peasant undertakes to pay a monetary impost from four to twelve times larger than the redemptory payment in any single government of our modern Empire. Such excessive exaction can be explained only by some specially fertile qualities in the land which do not appear in the agreement-deeds. Another difficulty is that the fragmentary character of such *data* as have survived to us prevents us from always distinguishing between normal instances and exceptional. On the whole, indications incline us to suppose that *large* monetary dues were everywhere the rule. The French soldier, Captain Margeret (who served the Tsar Boris and the first false Dmitri) has left us a description of the position of affairs in the Muscovite Empire of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[1] Probably he is referring to State and court lands when he writes that, instead of rendering dues in kind, the peasantry of regions far removed from the capital paid monetary imposts assessed at a very high rate. Indeed, if his testimony is credible, the *vit* of from 7 to 8 *dessiatini* paid what, translated into modern currency, would be equivalent to from 11 to 22 roubles per *dessiatina*. In this, of course, are included both landlord's and fiscal dues; the latter of which, at the close of the sixteenth century, might be reckoned at 1½ roubles per *dessiatina*, or a trifle more. Yet at the Emancipation in 1861 few provinces had their redemptory payments assessed at a rate equalling even the *minimum* sum quoted by Margeret—not with poll-tax, State communal taxes, and *mir* dues all thrown in. Moreover, inasmuch as, in many cases, the sixteenth-century peasant had to render his landlord both a monetary sum and a given portion of the harvest (*i.e.* every fifth, fourth, or third shock), as well as out of the remainder to reserve seed for sowing, to renew his live and dead stock, to pay

[1] In his *L'Estat de l'Empire de Russie* (1607).

State taxes, and to feed himself and his family—seeing, as I say, that he had to do all this, it is difficult to imagine how he ever contrived to meet his necessities, especially in view of the then prevalence of small plots. The burden of imposts and the lack of means must have deprived him of both the will and the power to extend his small taxable holding, and have forced him to look for support to such extraneous resources and industries as, placed in his way by abundance of water, timber, and waste land, were left untaxed by the State.[1] Possibly this explains the signs of a certain prosperity noticeable at this period, even on *small* arable estates; and in this connection a short unpublished document which, though lying without the limits of our period, throws a certain retrospective light upon the close of the sixteenth century has an interest all its own. Of date 1630, it consists of an inventory of "peasant chattels" (*i.e.* live stock, bees, beehives, grain in byre, rye-seed, and so forth) which were comprised in a *selo* in the province of Murom which belonged to the Troitski Monastery of St. Sergius. In that *selo* stood 14 peasant homesteads, containing a male labouring population of 37 souls; and inasmuch as they grew rye to the extent only of 21 *dessiatini*, we may take it that the total area of their tillage did not exceed 63 *dessiatini*,[2] or 4.4 *dessiatini* per homestead, or 1.7 *dessiatini* per head of male working population —a very beggarly allotment, seeing that 38 years ago (*i.e.* at the Emancipation) the same *selo* was ploughing fully three times as much. Nevertheless homesteads in this *selo* which, in that seventeenth century, were sowing winter corn-fields of from ½ to 1½ *dessiatini* are here set down as also possessing from 3 to 4 hives of bees, from 2 to 3 mares with foals, from 1 to 3 cows with calves, from 3 to 6 sheep, from 3 to 4 pigs, and from 6 to 10 *tchetverti* of grain in byre. Two homesteads which ploughed tillage of 12 and 15 *dessiatini* respectively are entered as containing 2 and 5 beehives, 4 and 10 mares with foals, 3 and 3 cows with calves, 5 and 9 sheep, 5 and 6 pigs, and 30 and 4 *tchetverti* of grain in byre.

To sum up the foregoing—we may picture the industrial position of the peasant of the sixteenth century as follows. He was, for the most part, an agriculturist on a small scale; a man unsettled, overburdened with debt, and engaged in an industry in which everything—homestead, plot, and implements—was either borrowed or hired; a

[1] See vol. i. p. 217.

[2] Owing to the three field system.

man who stocked his establishment, and executed his tasks, with the help of another man's capital, for which he paid in personal labour; and a man, who, under the goad of exactions, was inclined always to curtail, rather than to extend, his heavily rated *zapashka* or arable holding.

In the next chapter we shall see what the position of the peasantry became, in the early seventeenth century, under the influence of all the conditions of their life.

CHAPTER XIII

The views of two historians concerning the alleged agrarian attachment of the peasantry at the close of the sixteenth century—The law of 1597 concerning runaway peasants, and the supposed *ukaz* ordaining a general agrarian attachment of the peasantry—Peasant tenancy-agreements of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries—Industrial conditions which paved the way to serfdom—Agrarian attachment of the peasantry on State and court lands—Growth of the *ssuda* or landlord's loan, and increase of the personal dependence of the seigniorial peasantry upon their landlords—Peasant abductions and abscondings, and the legislative measures adopted against those offences—Position of the seigniorial peasantry at the beginning of the seventeenth century—Summary.

NEXT let us turn to one of the most difficult, as well as one of the most important, questions in our history—namely, the question of when and how serfdom arose.

In expounding the results of the *pomiestïe* system I said that it paved the way to a radical change in the fortunes of the peasantry. The customarily accepted view of that change might be outlined as follows. Up to the close of the sixteenth century the peasant was a free agriculturist who enjoyed the right of free removal from one plot to another, and from one landlord to another. Yet such removal gave rise to great evils, both for the social order and for the agrarian industry of the Empire. In particular, it affected the industry of small service landowners, who saw their peasantry attracted away from them to the estates of richer *otchinniki* and *pomiestchiki*, and themselves left without the labour necessary to perform their service to the State. These difficulties led the Government of the Tsar Feodor to publish an *ukaz* whereby the peasant's right of removal—*i.e.* of quitting land which he had once occupied—was abolished. All the grievous results of serfdom which later manifested themselves sprang from this attachment of the peasantry to the soil: and inasmuch as the *ukaz* of abolition of the peasant's right of removal was promulgated when Boris Godunov was governor of the State in Feodor's name, it is upon Boris that the responsibility for those results must fall. It was he who origin-

ated serf right, who first laid the foundations of serfdom. In this view we can distinguish two principal positions—namely (1) that at the close of the sixteenth century some general enactment or another altered the juridical status of the peasantry by depriving them of the right of removal and binding them to the soil, and (2) that it was that same act of agrarian attachment which caused the peasantry subsequently to become serfs to the landowners.

Yet this outline of the origin of serfdom does not make everything clear and precise. In the first place, it makes it appear as though one and the same legislative Act established both agrarian attachment of the peasantry and serf right—two institutions not only widely different in their character and origin, but actually exclusive, in many respects, of one another. In the history of non-free conditions agrarian attachment of a peasantry means the binding of a peasantry to the soil by a State measure, independently of the peasant's personal relation to the landowner (or, to be more precise, it means the subordination of that relation by a State measure to the agrarian attachment); while by serf right is meant that right of a man against the personality of his fellow which, at its inception, was founded upon a *private* juridical act—namely, upon the act of binding into forced service, independently of the relation of the serf to the soil; the right which, to quote our *Svod Zakonov*,[1] "delivered the serf over into the privy power and dominion of his master." Consequently this view combines in a single historical moment two legislative acts so dissimilar to one another as attachment to the soil and personal enserfment. This is my first objection. Secondly, not only has the general *ukaz* whereby peasant removal is alleged to have been abolished not come down to us, but of all the State Acts which have so come down to us not one contains so much as a hint that any such *ukaz* was ever published at all. The first State Act which would appear to show signs of an agrarian attachment of the peasantry, as a *general* measure, is an *ukaz* dated November 24th, 1597. Yet even in that document there is nothing to justify these tales concerning a general agrarian attachment of the *krestiané* at the end of the sixteenth century. All that the *ukaz* tells us is that any peasant who had absconded from his landlord at a date not more than five years previous to the 1st of September,[2] 1597, might, if the landlord had entered suit against him before the 1st of September,

[1] Digest of Laws.

[2] At that time New Year's Day.

1592, be arrested and restored to his former landlord, together with his family and goods; while if, on the other hand, a peasant had absconded at a date *more* than five years previous to the 1st of September, 1597, and the landlord had failed to enter suit against him before the 1st of September, 1592, the fugitive was to be immune from arrest, nor could any suits or petitions for his prosecution be entertained. More than this the Imperial *ukaz* and boyar agreement of 24th November does not say. Evidently the *ukaz* was speaking only of peasants who had left their landlords "not according unto term and without surrender"—*i.e.* not on St. George's Day, and without either giving legal notice to, or settling up accounts with, their landlords. In short, the *ukaz* merely established a *time-limit* for peasant suits and arrest—a time-limit which was purely retrospective in its action and fixed no term for the future. The measure was adopted (according to Speranski's[1] interpretation of the statute) merely in order to put an end to the difficulties and irregularities which had crept into judicial practice through the multitude and tardiness of suits against absconding peasantry. The *ukaz* imported nothing new into the law, but was designed simply to regularise *procedure* in respect of such defaulters. As early as the fifteenth century the appanage princes had adopted measures against *krestiané* who left their landlords without settling up their accounts with them.[2] For all that, there has been deduced from the *ukaz* of 24th November a theory that, five years previous to its publication (*i.e.* in 1592), there took place legislation by which the peasantry were deprived of the right of removal, and finally bound to the soil. On the other hand, Pogodin —and, after him, Bielaev—has categorically stated that the *ukaz* of 24th November affords no grounds for supposing that any such general enactment was made in the year referred to: though Pogodin dimly discerns in the document the establishment of a five-years' *future* time-limit for suits against absconding peasantry, and Bielaev considers that, though no general enactment abolishing the peasant's right of removal was made precisely in that year (namely, in 1592), such an ordinance was undoubtedly made at a date not anterior to 1590 (since from the latter year an Act has come down to us wherein the peasant's right of removal is seen still to be recognised). Consequently

[1] Minister in the reign of Alexander I., and a man of enlightened views who did much to ameliorate the condition of the serfs.

[2] See vol. i. pp. 186, 187.

(says Bielaev) it is to be hoped that in time the *ukaz* referred to will be unearthed from our archives. For my part, I venture to assert that no such *ukazi*—whether of 1590 or of 1592—will ever be found, seeing that neither the one nor the other was ever published. Some persons have even gone so far as to aver that the *ukaz* of November 24th, 1597, was the actual law which (indirectly, if not directly) bound the peasantry to the soil; that, in fact, without any previous interdiction, the Government forthwith recognised as illegal all peasant removals which had taken place during the five years previous to the publication of the Act, and enjoined such peasantry as had left their plots during that period to return to them as absconders. Pogodin, however (as I have said), rejects the idea of any special enactment being made during Feodor's reign, but is of opinion that serf right became established later, and gradually; that it arose *of itself*, as it were—extra-legally, not juridically, and through the mere course of events. Consequently our best plan will be to examine the phenomena in the land legislation of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, in order that we may see for ourselves the fortunes of the peasantry during that period.

From the period referred to there has come down to us a large assortment of peasant tenancy-agreements—documents wherein the peasant bargains with the landowner before settling on the latter's estate. Such agreement-deeds extend from the middle of the sixteenth century to about the middle of the seventeenth, or a little further. If, when perusing them, one forgets the story of the alleged general agrarian attachment of the peasantry during Feodor's reign, *they* at least will do nothing to remind one of it. In the early seventeenth century the peasant seems to have treated with the landowner much as he had done during the latter half of the sixteenth. That is to say, he bound himself, in the event of his removing, to pay quit-rent for the use of his cot, to return the loan, and to compensate the landlord for any exemptions which he (the peasant) had enjoyed. In all these agreements the peasant's power of changing his landlord is presumed as a sheer *right*: and, indeed, acceptance of the above theory that, at the close of the sixteenth century, the peasant was deprived of that right and bound to the soil would render a whole series of tenancy-agreements, couched in legal form, simply meaningless. For instance, in 1599, when transferring certain of its *krestiané* from one estate to another,

a monastery is seen making new contracts with them, and treating with them as with free leaseholders. Another document of that year sets forth that for a long while the monastery sought one of its peasantry who had quitted his holding without settling his accounts, and that, at length discovering him settled on the *otchina* of a certain servitor of the State, it called upon the latter's widow to surrender the fugitive; which the widow at once did. During the period of the *Russkaia Pravda* such an absconder would have been bound into full slavery for his offence: yet, in spite of the alleged agrarian attachment of the peasantry to which I have referred, we see the monastery not only awarding the culprit no punishment at all, but even concluding with him a new contract, and granting him both a fresh loan and an exemption for his re-stocking. Similar phenomena are to be observed during Michael's reign. From a tenancy-agreement concluded in the year 1630 we see that a certain peasant who settled on some land belonging to one of the monasteries of Tikhvin was accorded an exemption and a loan. Likewise he was not only to be relieved for a year both of fiscal taxes and estate dues, but also to receive from the monastery the sum of 10 roubles (in modern currency a little over 100 roubles) for the stocking of his farm, and 10 *tchetverti* of mixed grain besides. Now, in this peasant's agreement there occurs the following condition: "If so be that I" (the peasant is supposed to be speaking) "do live not with the Monastery, and on my portion, and according unto this covenant; or if so be that I shall begin to treat separately with other peasants,—then shall the Monastery lay upon me (in that it hath accorded me this aid in money and grain and exemption) 30 roubles under this present covenant"—and so forth. Not a hint that it would be *illegal* for the peasant to leave the plot which he was to rent of the monastery. All that the document binds him to do is to pay a *forfeit*, so that the landlord monastery may be compensated for out-of-pocket expenses. Thus peasant tenancy-agreements at least do not point to any general attachment of the *krestiané* to the soil during the first half of the seventeenth century—or at all events in Michael's reign. On the other hand, a few peasantry seem to have been bound to the soil and deprived of the right of removal long before the supposed *ukaz* of general attachment. In 1552 the peasantry of some "black" or State lands in the neighbourhood of Viazma were granted an Imperial charter whereby the

rural communes of the district were empowered both to recover such former members of theirs as had removed to monasterial estates at other than the legal term or without previous payment of communal dues and to resettle them on the plots which they had quitted—though at the same time these communes were also permitted to invite peasantry from *elsewhere*, if they so preferred it. This dispensation, of course, related to peasantry on *State* lands; yet approximately at the same period *all* cesspaying *krestiané* seem to have become bound to the soil, or to the dues payable on the same. In the sixties of the sixteenth century a rich family of saltmakers named Stroganov were granted a large tract of vacant land on the rivers Kama and Tchusova, as well as power to settle those lands with any immigrants whom they might choose to invite thither: *only*, the Stroganovs were not to extend that invitation to any peasantry "who paid cess and were inscribed" (*i.e.* who were already settled on cesspaying lands, and had had their names entered in agrarian registers), but immediately to surrender such immigrants, together with their families and goods, when called upon to do so by the local authorities of the districts whence the fugitives had come. Thus the theory of an *ukaz* abolishing peasant removal and binding the peasantry to the soil at the end of the sixteenth century is justified, as it were, from neither side—*i.e.* neither by anterior phenomena nor by posterior.

To understand the matter let us halt for a moment at the question—Was there anything, in this connection, for the legislature of the sixteenth century to abolish? Although close study of agrarian contracts of the period reveals certain indications of *otkaz* or "withdrawal"—*i.e.* of the peasant's free and legal right to remove from one landlord for another—it is easy to see that instances of its practice are very rare, and that tenancy-agreements which directly mention or tacitly postulate such a right of removal constitute, at this period, exceptional phenomena, for the reason that agreements of the kind were possible only for peasants (few in number) who were either in a position, on quittance, to discharge all obligations to their landlord, or had been free men when they first settled as cesspaying *krestiané*. The reason why the majority of cesspaying peasants had ceased to enjoy the right of removal was, not that that right had been abrogated by any general law, but that the peasants themselves had either surrendered or lost (through private measures) the *power* to enjoy it. Such deprivation

was the result of a long and complex process—of the process which gradually compounded the primal, fundamental conditions of serf right. Let me expound the phenomenon in its barest outline. Approximately from the close of the fourteenth to the beginning of the seventeenth century there continued in progress among the peasantry of Okan-Volgan Rus a ceaseless movement of migration. At first that movement tended in *one* direction only—namely, northwards and beyond the Upper Volga; but in time (*i.e.* from the middle of the sixteenth century, with the conquest of the Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan) it began to flow in *two* directions—namely, south-eastwards along the Don and south-eastwards along the Middle and Lower Volga. During this movement there became defined two *strata* among the peasantry—namely, a settled, sedentary *stratum* (that of *starozhiltsi* or "old dwellers") and a migratory, vagrant *stratum* (that of *prichodtsi* or "incomers").[1] These *strata* met with differing fortunes, both on State and court lands (properties practically identical with one another) and on lands of service and ecclesiastical proprietors. In spite of the fact that *starozhiltsvo* or "old residence" connoted length of local habitation and membership of a commune (urban or rural), it was not originally defined by any exact qualifying term. Peasants were accounted *starozhiltsi* who had occupied their plots for five years, and so were peasants who could say of the lands which they held that their fathers had held them before them. Yet, though *starozhiltsvo* had *in itself* no juridical significance limiting the personal freedom of the "old dweller," it gradually acquired such a significance through its connection with another bond—namely, with the joint guarantee which existed in all communes situated on State and court lands. In such communes the "old dwellers" formed the basic *nucleus* whereby the tax-solvency of the unit was preserved, and any secession of "old dwellers" led to an over-burdening of the remaining members, and so to arrears. Consequently it was the perpetual care of those communes to place a substantial obstacle in the way of *starozhiltsi* who wished to migrate to lands more lightly taxed—more especially to monasterial lands. The obstacle in question usually took the form of an enormous quit-rent, calculated on the basis of the number of years which the given "old dweller" had spent on his holding. In fact, the calculation of this rent often became impossible where father and son had dwelt

[1] Immigrants.

for several successive decades on their plot. The financial straits of the communes were further increased by the fact that the Government began to bind individuals to their status, whether as peasants or State servitors, for the purpose of securing for itself permanent bodies of persons able to render either cess or service. In the end these two conditions led to the conversion of hitherto temporary, private contracts into matters of public policy; until at or about the beginning of the seventeenth century there took place a general attachment of *starozhiltsi*, not only to their status, but also to their domicile. From an Act of 1568 we see that even then it was the rule to return to their original habitations all peasant emigrants from court lands who had been *starozhiltsi* in their native *sela;* and at the close of the sixteenth century this significance of *starozhiltsvo* seems to have led further to the fixing of an exact term of qualification for "old residence." In a charter granted to the town of Toropetz in the year 1591 we find mention of certain "ordained years" (*i.e.* some regular term of years) after which the townsmen might at any time recover and resettle in their former habitations any such former cesspayers of theirs as had left the township: and if by these "ordained years" is meant the legal term which was required to convert a cesspayer into an "old dweller," we may take it that that precise length of time is directly stated in an edict issued thirty-five years later. In 1626 the Spasski Monastery of Yaroslavl received an order from the Government to have listed, for purposes of State tax-assessment, all tenants, peasants or otherwise, who were then settled on the Monastery's lands in Yaroslavl. This was in continuation of a previous order issued in 1624, when the Government prescribed that all persons resident on the Monastery's lands should be canvassed, and that such of them as were found either to be free and old-established tenants of the Monastery's (consequently, not State cesspayers) or persons who, though formerly cesspayers to the State, had "come from under the Tsar" (*i.e.* from State lands) "*more than ten years agone*" or persons who had "left in their habitations, and in their stead, folk who do pay cess" were to be assessed to the Monastery as before, and not to the city of Yaroslavl; also, that all inhabitants of Yaroslavl who had left the township should be sought out, and particulars taken of the period when, and the destination whither, they had removed; and, lastly, that such of those ex-inhabitants as had departed "*not more than ten years*

agone" should be returned to Yaroslavl forthwith, and resettled in the habitations which they had quitted. The substitution[1] here made equivalent to "old residence" points directly to the joint guarantee as the source of the agrarian attachment of "old dwellers." Eventually *all* cesspaying and registered peasantry of *volosti* on State lands were bound either to their holdings or to their communes, as hitherto had been done with *starozhiltsi* only: and of this attachment we find direct mention in an edict issued, in 1610, to one Levshin, prefect of the township of Tchuchloma and the State *volosti* adjacent thereto, while at the same time the *source* of the attachment is indicated: that source being the desire of the State both to maintain the tax-solvency of the peasantry and to arrest the shrinkage of cesspaying land. Levshin, therefore, was ordered neither to allow peasantry to quit any State lands *volosti* in his district nor to admit to those *volosti* from elsewhere peasantry who had not received a Government permit to enter, for the reason that "certain thriftless and brawling *krestiané* have diminished their lands for the ploughing, and have begun to dwell, not upon a *vit*, but upon a moiety or a third thereof, to the end that they may escape payment of dues unto the State: wherefore they have assigned their portions unto younger men, and do plough waste places in the room of their own, and do reap grass on land that be void." Levshin was commanded to inquire into all this, and to see to it that *krestiané* on State lands duly cultivated their holdings and ceased to reduce their taxable tillage, as well as to ensure that, in future, such *krestiané* paid full tale of cess per *vit*, according to their stock and produce. Thus peasantry on State and court lands were finally bound to the soil, and formed a close-ringed class. Debarred from quitting their holdings for private estates, they were forbidden also to introduce into their midst peasant-immigrants from elsewhere: which segregation, of course, was designed to strengthen the joint guarantee for the tax-solvency of the rural communes. Yet between this attachment to the soil and serf law there was nothing in common, since the attachment in question was simply and solely a police measure.

Even as, on State or fiscal lands, the joint guarantee led to agrarian attachment of the peasantry, so, on private or seigniorial lands, the *ssuda* or landlord's loan paved the way to serf law. At

[1] See above—" persons who had 'left in their habitations, and in their stead, folk who do pay cess,'" &c.

the middle of the fifteenth century we see the *krestiané* on private lands showing signs of exemption from cess, while there also becomes perceptible a widespread increase of the loan and "work silver."[1] Peasant removal had not yet become restricted either by a legal date or by an obligation immediately to repay the money lent by the landlord, but the *krestianin* was at liberty to discharge his debt at any time within two years of his leaving, as well as without interest. *Starozhiltsi*, in particular, enjoyed special exemptions for remaining quietly on their plots, or for returning to them when ordered to do so. From the close of the fifteenth century, however, we see the seigniorial peasantry in a very different plight. For instance, we read that the Abbot Joseph of Volokolamsk frequently had to urge upon the local landowners the undesirability of imposing excessive dues and forced labour upon their *krestiané*, while Vassian Kossoi, in his polemic with landed monasticism,[2] delivers a furious attack upon the latter for first of all ruining its peasantry with its grasping usury, and then inhumanly evicting them from their *sela*. Again, Herbertstein (who gained a close insight into the position of affairs in the Russian Empire during the time of the father of Ivan the Terrible) writes that, at that period, the peasantry were forced to do six days' labour a week for their landlords, that their position was a most grievous one, and that their property lay at the mercy of great and small landowners alike. Yet, in the opening half of the following century, the seigniorial peasant was still free to change his domicile, and an instance of this is recorded in the *zhitïe* of Gerassim Boldinski, in which it is stated that, after the industrial prosperity of the monastery which he founded near Viazma had caused the establishment to become so resorted to by the peasantry of the neighbouring *volosti* that there had sprung up around it a peasant colony, a Muscovite boyar happened to be journeying in the region, and, on hearing how matters stood, became so filled with rage at the thought that monasterial peasants had not to pay cess on the same footing as had peasant-tenants under *lay* landlords that he sent for the offenders, and commanded them to be beaten: nor, when Gerassim interfered on behalf of his people, did the irate nobleman hesitate to turn upon him also, and to abuse him "with unseemly speech"; after which he commanded the peasants to be beaten afresh, and worse than before.

[1] See p. 210.

[2] See p. 182.

Various conditions helped to impair the position of the seigniorial peasantry—namely, (1) increased State taxation in proportion as the Empire expanded, (2) extensive development of *pomiestïe* allotment in proportion as the burden of military service became heavier through constant wars, (3) increase of peasant industry based upon the *ssuda* or landlord's loan (this was particularly the case on ecclesiastical and *pomiestïe* estates), and (4) neglect of the legislature to regularise the agrarian relations of the peasantry, who were simply instructed to obey their landlord in everything, to plough for him his arable land, and to pay him such tithes as he chose to impose upon them. Yet up to the middle of the sixteenth century (as seen from agrarian inventories and registers of the central provinces of the Empire) the local peasantry remained settled in *sela* and *derevni* which comprised numerous homesteads apiece, large plots, and only a limited amount of fallow land; while a party of foreigners then travelling between Yaroslavl and Moscow inform us that they found the region studded with small settlements in which there resided a manifest plethora of population. During the *second* half of the century, however, and more especially during its final decades, the picture undergoes a striking change. The rural population of the central provinces grows notably sparser; old *derevni* become *pustoshi*;[1] *potchinki*[1] are rarely to be met with or entirely absent; agrarian registers contain a hitherto unwonted proportion of empty homesteads, as well as of homestead sites from which the actual buildings have disappeared (during the eight years 1566–1574 one township of Murom, in particular, saw disappear no fewer than 476 out of its original 587 homesteads); the Englishman Fletcher,[2] when travelling from Vologda to Moscow, encounters *sela* through which the roadway is lined, for a verst or more, with deserted huts; the area of derelict and forest land expands; the few peasantry still retaining their old habitations are seen to be occupying diminished plots; and the curtailment of peasant tillage is accompanied by an increase in seigniorial tillage worked by *kholopi* in default of peasant labour. In proportion as the central provinces became depopulated there became opened up the far regions of the South-East—the regions of the Upper Oka, the Upper Don,

[1] See p. 198.

[2] Giles Fletcher, uncle of the great dramatist, and English Ambassador to Russia during a portion of the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

and the Middle and Lower Volga. This change in the distribution of the population militated still further against the position of the seigniorial peasantry of Central Rus, both in their industrial relations and their juridical. State and landlord's imposts became heavier in proportion as the labour supply declined; the loan system spread, and with it peasant dependence upon the landlord; nor can there be any doubt that the old-established landowners of the central provinces completed the work of the new *pomiestchiki* of the Steppes (*i.e.* the work of breaking up the old peasant *dvor* or complex household) by forming, through the ever-growing loan system, a class of homesteaders made up of the unattached members—sons, nephews, and younger brothers—of the old peasant families. As on State and court lands, so on seigniorial estates there existed a *stratum* of *starozhiltsi* or "old dwellers." Yet these were of an altogether different type to the *starozhiltsi* whom we have previously studied. We have seen that, on State lands, the "old dwellers" formed the fundamental *cadres* which supported the whole tax-solvency of the rural communes, the whole burden of the joint guarantee. On private or seigniorial lands, however, the "old dwellers" constituted merely the most embarrassed and insolvent of the debtors. Also, I have said that the old-established *volost* communes, though originally united in a common guarantee for tax-solvency, fell apart in proportion as there became introduced into their midst a number of privileged private properties, *otchini* and *pomiestia*, which constituted special communes to themselves and new juridical entities. Of this we see an instance when, in 1592, the peasantry of a *pomiestïe* in the province of Vologda belonging to a certain Astafius Orlovski borrowed of another landlord than their own the sum of 4 roubles (equivalent to a little over 200 modern roubles) "for the common outgoings[1] of all the *pomiestïe*," and completed the transaction without any participation therein by their own landlord, Astafius. Yet the private landowner must have had a share in the joint-guarantee, seeing that, free as he was both to ply his peasantry with labour and exactions and to exercise rights of judicial and police supervision over them and (sometimes) to exempt them from payment of State taxes, he must also have acted as their responsible mediator in matters affecting *State* obligations, even though the *volost* commune might continue to preserve its taxatory integrity, and

[1] *i.e.* State taxes.

the peasantry of all private landlords without distinction "to render all manner of cess unto the State both in common with one another and according unto equality in the *volost*"—*i.e.* according to comparative assessment.

In this differentiation between seigniorial and State lands we see the first cause and origin of that responsibility of landowners for the tax-solvency of their peasants which came to be one of the constituent norms of serf law. As early as the sixteenth century a landowning establishment is found paying the taxes of its peasantry, when, in 1560, the authorities of the Michaelitski Monastery complained to the Tsar that their *krestiané* were being so grievously exploited by the *otchinniki* and *pomiestchiki* of the neighbourhood that they (the monasterial authorities) had not only to grant their impoverished tenantry constant exemptions from monasterial dues, "but also of themselves to pay, as in many years past, the State renderings on behalf of their *krestiané*." Self-interest incited the prudent landlord to become the guarantor of his tenants even before the law accorded him the right to become their actual proprietor: which circumstance affords us an explanation of the position of *starozhiltsi* on seigniorial lands. That is to say, it is improbable that the landowner would have shown himself so generous an exemptor of his *krestiané*, so ready a payer of their taxes, if he had not also beheld in them short-term settlers whom the next St. George's Day might see gone from their holdings. Consequently his first care was to make the *krestianin* as *durable* a settler as possible—to make of him a *starozhiletz*. Not unnaturally the peasant was inclined to take the same view, since, once installed in, and grown used to, his homestead, a prudent husbandman would not lightly care to abandon a plot into which he had put much labour and whereon, in many cases, he had grown to man's estate. Even before the middle of the sixteenth century we see evidence of the presence, on private lands, of a numerous class of *starozhiltsi;* but later, when the conquest of the Lower Volga[1] had caused the migratory movement to sweep the peasantry from the clay lands of the central provinces to the black lands of the South, the drain of junior members of peasant families (*liudi nepismennïe* or "unlisted folk") gradually weakened the old peasant *dvor* of the central provinces, and forced it to diminish its tillage. The result was that, towards the close of the sixteenth century,

[1] *i.e.* of the Tartar Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan.

numerous homesteads on private lands which, in registers of the first half of the century, had figured as "tenanted" habitations now fell vacant, since many a husbandman, grown weary of toiling on unproductive and forest-encumbered clay lands (even though his father had worked on them before him) had found his eyes drawn towards the virgin loam of the Steppes, where new loans and exemptions were to be had. Yet right up to the close of the century the landowners of the central provinces continued their efforts to save themselves from finding not a single "tenanted" homestead left on their estates; those efforts usually taking the form of a gradual increase in loans, exemptions, and quit-rents (the first-named being raised from half-a-rouble to five, and the last-named from one to five or, even, in some cases, to ten). Individual examples will show us what a difficult matter it was for the peasant who had remained more than ten years[1] on the same estate (and so had qualified as a *starozhiletz* or "old dweller") to rid himself of his indebtedness. To presume the easiest possible conditions of quittance—let us suppose that a peasant leased a holding, and borrowed thereon 3 roubles (exemptions may be left out of the question, since they constituted a more or less infrequent feature in these cases). After spending, say, eleven years on his plot, and thus becoming a *starozhiletz*, such a peasant, on leaving, would be required to repay the landlord's loan, to render him quit-rent for his homestead (in forest localities this usually amounted to some 14 kopecks a year, while in open country—far though the site might be removed from building timber—it amounted to double that sum), and to render some 6 kopecks in the form of other payments; all of which disbursements, in that latter sixteenth century, would represent a combined sum of (calculated in modern currency) over 200 roubles. Likewise I will adduce an example of quittance in the case of a short-term tenancy. In 1585 two peasants of fiscal or court lands left their holdings and removed to a vacant monasterial *derevnia*. Before settling in the latter, however, they concluded an agreement that, within three exempted years, they would build themselves a new homestead and byres, and also re-fence, plough up, and manure the land: for all of which they were to receive a loan of five roubles. If, on the other hand, they failed to carry out their contract within the stipulated three years, and desired to leave the plot, they were, on doing so, to render both an outgoing rent, the amount of the

[1] See p. 226.

loan advanced, and a further sum of 10 roubles: all of which, in modern currency, would be about equal to a sum of 700 roubles—a sum most unlikely to have lain within the competency of those debtors! True, as free men they might have left the holding without making any payment at all, but in that case the monastery could have sued them for the money, and the court condemned them to pay; whereafter, had they failed to do so, the court could have delivered them over into the custody of the monastery "*do iskupa*" or "until redemption." In other words, it could have converted them into *kholopi* to their creditor until such time (probably after a long term of years) as they had worked off their debt to him in the form of personal labour. Thus the landlord's loan gave rise to relations wherein the seigniorial peasant had to choose between a definite term of insolvent peasanthood and an indefinite term of slavery. Yet this restriction was not the police attachment to the place of domicile which the joint guarantee for the tax-solvency of communes on State lands established, but a mere industrial dependence, through debt, upon an individual (*i.e.* upon the landowner) under the general civil law of the country. This difference must be carefully laid to heart if we are to avoid mistakes.

Thus the close of the sixteenth century saw the peasant's right of removal expire of itself, and without any abrogation by the law. Only a few peasants continued to enjoy it whose tenancy, entailing no outlay upon the landlord, made it possible for them to settle accounts on mere payment of quit-rent. For all other peasantry free removal degenerated into three forms—namely, *pobieg* or absconding, *svoz* or abduction, and *sdacha* or substitution (of one tenant for another). In agrarian registers of the sixteenth century the first two forms are indicated in such phrases as *viebiezhal, shol, sbieg bez viestno, skitaetsia*, and *vievezen*—all of them terms denoting either that the peasant quitted his plot with more or less haste and secrecy or that he was abducted from it by another landowner. Also, between these three forms there was a difference both qualitative and quantitative. *Pobieg* restored to the peasant his freedom, but contravened the law; *svoz* did nothing to contravene the law, but also did nothing to restore to the peasant his freedom; while *sdacha*, though restoring to the peasant his freedom and not contravening the law, was in itself difficult, and therefore feasible only in rare cases. A register for the year 1580 shows us

that, on certain court lands belonging to the Suzerain Prince Simeon Bekbulatovitch, and situated in the province of Tver, not one out of the 306 cases of peasant removal locally recorded in that year is set down as *sdacha*. Cases of normal removal—*i.e.* of removal without extraneous aid or an infringement of the law—are to be met with but rarely in this register, and constitute no more than 17 per cent. of the whole. Cases of *pobieg* usually occur at another than the legal term for removal, or else without legal notice, payment of quit-rent, or any final settling up of accounts with the landlord. Such cases amount, in the register, to 21 per cent. of the whole. The most common form of removal is seen to be *svoz* or abduction—cases of which amount, on these lands of Bekbulatovitch's, to 61 per cent. of the whole. For this the reason is clear. The peasant was seldom in a position to put himself right with his landlord, and so was forced to seek refuge in abduction by another landowner, who paid the defaulter's loan and quit-rent for him, and then bore him off to work on his own estate. Nevertheless, in changing his plot of land, the peasant did not also change his *juridical position*, since he merely passed from one creditor to another. Peasant abduction made such strides during the sixteenth century that the operation came to be participated in by all landowners without distinction—both by monasteries, by boyars, and by small *otchinniki* and *pomiestchiki*. Even rural communes on State and court lands sometimes ventured to abduct *krestiané* from lay landowners (and that, too, "by violence," or against the will of the landlord) when they (the communes) needed fresh cesspayers for the occupation of vacant plots. Thanks to this "peasant hunting," the sixteenth century saw a keen rivalry for peasant labour arise among landowners—the season of St. George's Day (November 26th) being the time when the worst scenes of turbulence and irregularity took place in *selo* and *derevnia*. On or about that date it was a common occurrence for the bailiff of some rich lay landowner, or the steward or *poselski*[1] of some great monastery, to make a round of such of the local *sela* as were tenanted by State peasantry or owned by small *pomiestchiki*, and to bargain with the local *krestiané* for transference of their services to his own master, in return for payment of their outstanding loans and rents; after which he would carry off his recruits in triumph to his employer's estate. Thus threatened

[1] Foreman of agricultural lands.

with loss of cesspayers or agricultural hands, the peasant communal authorities and small *pomiestchiki* would do all they could to restrain their peasantry from leaving them—either by putting them in fetters, by imposing upon them excessive quit-rents, by annexing their savings, or by collecting an armed force to withstand their passage. Indeed, to the severity of these St. George's Day riotings the number of suits entered by small *pomiestchiki*, or by communes on State lands, affords eloquent testimony.

The two above-mentioned forms (*pobieg* and *svoz*) into which free peasant removal degenerated, and not the right of removal itself, was what the Muscovite Government sought to restrict, and even to abolish, from the close of the sixteenth century onwards. Neither form did anything to better the peasant's position, while undoubtedly both of them entailed grave evils upon the State and its agrarian industry, as well as even graver evils upon rural communes bound together in a common guarantee or upon small landowners rendered liable, through their position, to military service. In other words, peasant abduction became the peculiar sport, the peculiar privilege, of the great landowners alone, and so developed into an institution which, while failing to preserve to the peasant his freedom, worked serious detriment to the State's interests. Through loss of cesspayers, rural communes on State lands became insolvent taxatory units, while, through loss of agricultural hands, small service landowners became inefficient defenders of their country. Moreover, peasant abscondings and abductions indirectly contributed to the passage of peasant cesspayers into the category of *kholopi*. In defining the conditions of peasant removal, the *Sudebnik* of 1497 enacts only a legal date and a payment of quit-rent, but in the *Sudebnik* of 1550 we come upon the following important amendment: "Whoso be a *krestianin*, and be sold, together with his ploughing,[1] into full slavery, the same shall go forth without term, and there shall no quit-rent be demanded of him." Yet, though the peasant whom abduction had plunged into a tangle of indebtedness, or the peasant whom successive abscondings had ruined in his industry, could turn for an escape from his embarrassments to this addition of the *Sudebnik's*, he no sooner became a slave than he ceased to be a taxpayer, and so became lost to the exchequer. These grievous results of peasant removal the Muscovite legislature of the late sixteenth and

[1] Arable plot.

early seventeenth centuries sought to remove. The reign of Boris Godunov saw published (on November 28th, 1601) an *ukaz* whereby, in future, none but small landowners (*i.e.* State servitors of the secondary and inferior grades) were to abduct peasantry, and then only in batches of two at a time: which enactment, of course, deprived the great landowners around Moscow (for the most part, men of the higher grades of the service, and therefore owners of large *otchini*), as well as the monasteries and all *volosti* situated on State and court lands, of the right of recruiting *krestiané* from other proprietors. Now, if we were to judge only by the fact that the *ukaz* opens with a statement that the Tsar had decided to grant his peasantry "right of removal" because of the endless exactions and lawsuits which were imposed upon them by the landowners, the document would seem to be a measure wholly directed against the landowners and in favour of the *krestiané:* yet, as a matter of fact, this preamble made, the *ukaz* goes on to speak, not of *removal* at all, but of "*carryings off*" of peasantry by rival landowners. Hence, in speaking of "right of removal," the *ukaz* evidently meant "right of abduction"—the process which had taken the place of free removal. A second *ukaz* (of November 24th, 1602) repeats the previous year's limitation of abduction, but is clearly inspired to do so, not by any general desire for a law on the subject, but by a particular desire to put an end to the killings and plunderings with which abductions of peasantry were usually accompanied. Since, however, such irregularities were due to the unwillingness of landowners to surrender peasantry whom they had abducted, we may take it that, in each case, the true purpose of these *ukazi* was to define the persons to whom the right of "carrying off" peasantry (*i.e.* of abducting them without the consent of their landlord, by mere agreement with the peasants themselves) was henceforth to belong, as well as the source from which that right proceeded. Consequently abduction of peasantry *with* the consent of their landlords must have been the recognised, permanent rule from which certain exceptions were to be permitted by the *ukazi* in question, as temporary measures designed solely to hold good during the two years of the documents' publication. At the same time it should be noted that the second ordinance expressly enacts that peasants should be abducted only "into peasantry." That is to say, abduction, even within the prescribed limits, was never to relieve the *krestianin* of his cess-liability, but always to leave him a *krestianin*—*i.e.*

a taxpaying homesteader—even under a new landlord. This principle led to a third *ukaz* (of February 1st, 1606) which expressly forbade the passage of a peasant into slavery. During the years 1601–1603 successive failures of the harvest in Rus had compelled large numbers of the peasantry to leave their landlords, owing to their inability to pursue their industry in the face of repeated seasons of scarcity; and many of these fugitives had been engaged by other landowners as their *kholopi*. Consequently the above *ukaz* of February 1st ordains that peasants who have absconded before the lean years, and thereafter passed into slavery, shall return to their former landlords as once more *krestiané;* whereby we see set aside the article in the *Sudebnik* of 1550 which permitted a *krestianin*, with his plot, to be sold into full slavery. Nevertheless peasants who had left their landlords *during* the lean years were not to be restored to their former habitations, but to be left in the status which they had entered into after absconding.

From this we see that none of the above *ukazi* looked upon the *krestianin* as attached either to the soil or to his landlord; also that none of them bore reference to the *krestianin's* right of removal, but solely to abducted or absconding peasants. That is to say, without abolishing the peasant's right of removal, the legislation which these ordinances embodied sought to meet such *consequences* of that right as militated against the State order. This it strove to effect (1) by forbidding the passage of *krestiané* into the non-taxable category—*i.e.* into the category of slaves, (2) by attempting to abolish the "peasant hunting" wherewith the great landowners endeavoured to recruit peasantry from the estates of small proprietors and peasant communes on State lands, and (3) by prosecuting (through suits entered by landlords) such illegal abscondings as infringed the landlord's right of property. This attitude on the part of the legislature—an attitude which left untouched the juridical essence of peasant-landowner agreements, but merely sought to check *abuses* in connection therewith—helped to maintain the purely civil character of these transactions. So too with the five-years' time-limit for suits against absconding peasants which the *ukaz* of February 1st, 1606, established. "Upon the *krestianin* who hath fled shall judgement not be given after that five years be past." These various legislative measures against absconding peasantry were consummated by an *ukaz* of March 9th, 1607: in which Act we see a first attempt to remove peasant "flights" out

of the province of civil infringements of the law (which were punishable only on the initiative of a private complainant), and to convert them into criminal acts, offences against the State order. Under this *ukaz* the task of searching out and returning runaway *krestiané* to their holdings was imposed (independently of the landlord's suit) upon the provincial administrations, on pain of grave responsibility for non-fulfilment of this (for those administrations) novel duty; while for the harbouring of runaways (an offence hitherto non-punishable at all) the *ukaz* appointed, besides compensation to the landlord-complainant, the levy of a fine of ten roubles to the exchequer (about a hundred roubles, in our own currency) upon each peasant household and individual peasant who should be guilty of harbouring. Lastly, any person who should aid in a peasant "flight" was not only to be fined as above, but also subjected to *torgovaia kasn* or "market-place chastisement" —*i.e.* to the *knut*. At the same time, the *ukaz* extended the time-limit for suits against absconding peasantry from five to *fifteen* years, while it also accorded direct recognition to personal (as distinguished from agrarian) attachment of the seigniorial peasantry by ordaining that those of them who had been registered fifteen years before the date of publication of the Act (*i.e.* those of them who had been entered on the agrarian lists for 1592 and 1593) should "be unto those unto whom they be ascribed therein."[1] Nevertheless the *ukaz* either proved a failure or was looked upon as a prohibition of peasant abscondings and abductions rather than as an abolition of the right of removal, since peasant contracts still continued to be made on the old lines, and the concession of a fifteen-years' time-limit for landlords' suits of itself helped to preserve to peasant tenancy-agreements their former character of purely civil transactions. As a matter of fact, the *ukaz* was published at a time when the Period of Troubles had intervened to hinder its working; it was an Act which sought to tighten the skein of peasant-landlord relations at a period when all the foundations of the State were tottering, and when both the cesspaying and the non-free classes were too much engaged in sloughing their old obligations to feel inclined to accept any new ones.

Thus the question of the seigniorial peasantry remained undecided up to the very close of the Period of Troubles, while the industrial depen-

[1] *i.e.* should be attached to those landlords whose tenants they had been at the time of registration.

dence of such peasants upon their landlord increased until it had practically deprived them of the right of removal. Yet never at any time was any definite or direct abrogation of this right enacted by the legislature. All that the latter ever sought to do was to restrict such of the *forms* of that right as proved injurious to the State. That is to say, instead of establishing restriction of the *krestianin's* freedom, it sought to preserve inviolate the legal relations existing between the parties. By the opening of the seventeenth century, however, this position of affairs resulted in the landowners adopting the view that their peasantry were their *serfs*. Even in the reign of Boris Godunov we see this view expressed on an occasion when a foreign observer (Schiller) observes that, even under previous rulers of Moscow, the landowners of Rus had been accustomed to look upon their tenantry as their "bondsmen." It must have been the same view which inspired landowners of the latter half of the sixteenth century to insert into their wills a clause that *both their krestiané and their household servants* should continue to work for their (the testators') widows until their (the widows') decease. Thus by the close of the Period of Troubles two leading ideas had developed—namely, (1) that it was imperative to abolish peasant abduction effected without the consent of the landlord, as the chief source of all the abuses and irregularities then existent in rural life, and (2) that the seigniorial peasant was a serf bound, if not to the land, at all events to his landlord. Prohibition of peasant abduction is demanded both in the treaty concluded by Saltikov with Sigismund III. of Poland on February 4th, 1610, and in the treaty concluded by the Muscovite boyars with the same ruler on August 17th of that year, and in the pan-territorial proclamation by which, on June 30th, 1611, an armed force was called for to rescue the city of Moscow from the Poles. Likewise, the notion that the seigniorial peasant was attached to the person of his landlord keeps peeping out in certain early seventeenth-century donation-deeds whereby lands were conveyed to the Troitski Monastery. In these documents the benefactors impose upon their relatives, in the event of the latter redeeming the estate concerned, the condition that, provided the monasterial authorities settle the property with peasantry, build them homesteads, break the soil for cultivation, clear the timber, and reap the sown crops, the said relatives shall, on redemption, take over all buildings on the estate at the monks' valuation, but "*shall send the krestiané who be established thereon unto other demesnes of the*

said Monastery." Nevertheless this was not the normal practice, but merely a procedure at which the law connived as being at any time capable of annulment by a legal tribunal. Thus in 1622 one Larionov sold his *otchina* to a certain Mamatov, on condition that, in the event of Larionov's relatives redeeming the land, he (Larionov) should repay all loans advanced by Mamatov to peasantry whom he might have settled on the estate, while Mamatov himself was to retain the said peasantry as his own, "*save and except that they be adjudged one with the otchina*,"—in which case Larionov was to pay Mamatov a certain sum per *krestianin*, as well as per the amount of stock belonging to each. From the reservation italicised we see that, even at the beginning of the third decade of the seventeenth century, no decision had yet been come to—no, not even in principle—on the question of the personal attachment of the seigniorial peasantry.

To sum up our conclusions,—up to the very close of the period which we have been studying the legislature never established serf law. Peasantry on State and court lands it bound to the soil or to rural communes, as a police-fiscal measure for the securing of their (the peasants') tax-solvency and the better working of the joint guarantee; but peasantry on private or seigniorial lands it neither bound to the soil nor deprived of their right of removal. That is to say, the legislature never at any time bound the seigniorial peasantry directly and unconditionally to the *landowners themselves*. Nevertheless the peasant's right of removal seldom remained operative in its purest and original form, since the action of the *ssuda* or landlord's loan during the sixteenth century caused that right to assume forms which were more or less destructive of its own existence. Upon those forms the legislature kept an ever-watchful eye, and, in following up their development, opposed to each of them, in turn, a corrective, with the object of averting the injury which they threatened to the exchequer or the social order. In time the hopeless indebtedness into which the peasantry became plunged by the growth of the migratory movement caused peasant "flights" to increase in number, and lawsuits against runaways to become more and more involved; with the result that, while continuing to strengthen its measures against fugitive *krestiané* and their abetting, the Government also found itself forced to pass ordinances regulating the time-limit for suits against them, with the object of lessening the number of legal causes and differences which

arose out of peasant abscondings. Next, the right of peasant abduction led to riotings and complicated litigation between landowners: whereupon the legislature was driven to limit that right both with a classification of persons entitled by their rank to abduct and with a condition that the assent of the landowner whose peasantry were to be abducted should previously be obtained. Again, the *Sudebnik* of 1550 made it lawful for a *krestianin* to be sold, with his plot, into full slavery, and thus deprived the exchequer of many a cesspayer: wherefore later *ukazi* of 1602 and 1606 established "peasant perpetuity," or absolute permanence of the cesspaying peasant in his status. In this way the *krestianin*, though legally a free man as regards his ancient right of removal, was, in reality, hemmed in on every side, seeing that he could neither leave his plot with or without legal notice, nor of his own free will change his landlord (through the method of abduction) or his avocation (through the method of renouncing his freedom). In this position his only course was surrender. Yet it was not until a date lying beyond the limits of the period under study that the peasant question attained this solution, since even during the first two decades of the seventeenth century, when all the economic conditions of the seigniorial peasant's non-freedom had become operative, there still remained undiscovered the juridical norm which subsequently confirmed that practical bondage, and converted it into serf dependence. The norm desiderated I will state in advance, since its formulation may serve us as a convenient point to halt upon before proceeding to further study of serf law. The essence of that norm lay in the fact that *the peasant, when bargaining with the landowner for a plot and a loan, of himself, and in perpetuity, renounced (through his tenancy-contract) the right of ever, or by any means whatsoever, terminating the obligations which by that contract he assumed.* This was the condition which, by its introduction into the agreement referred to, communicated to the whole transaction the significance of personal enserfment.

CHAPTER XIV

Review of the foregoing—The administration of the Muscovite Empire during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—Conditions unfavourable to the working of that administration—A general survey of its organisation and character—The administration of an appanage principality—"Commissioned boyars" and the Boyar *Duma*—*Namiestniki* and *volosteli*—The nature of *kormlenia*—Changes in the central administration of the Muscovite Empire from the middle of the fifteenth century—*Prikazi* and the Boyar *Duma*—The nature of the activity of those two factors.

WE have now studied the external position and internal social organisation of the Muscovite Empire during the first century and a half of its existence, and have seen how its territory expanded, and how its social classes acquired their several positions and mutual relations in the State. Between those two processes it is not difficult to trace an internal connection. External struggles waxed more frequent and burdensome, and entailed greater sacrifices on the part of the nation; social relations became more complex under the spur of ever-accumulating State obligations; and the incidence of service and leasehold cess caused the community to enter upon a process of dismemberment into corporate classes. Such a course of events could not possibly have furnished conditions favourable to popular industry and social well-being. Still more important is the fact that the expenditure of the nation's energies upon external warfare left insufficient room for the growth of the nation's *intellectual* interests: with the result that popular thought became stifled, and hindered from envisaging the tasks which rose to confront the new national State during the process of its formation. Also, we have seen how external difficulties and internal moral inertia were responsible for many fortuitous, tentative, and contradictory decisions on questions affecting the social adjustment, even as we have seen with what a scanty stock of ideas, yet with what an abundance of errors, the political and industrial positions both of the boyars, of the official class at large, of the monasterial clergy, and of the peasantry severally ordered themselves.

These difficulties were bound to find reflection in the structure

of the State's administration. Here again we see a process for which few favourable conditions were to hand, seeing that few such conditions were to be looked for from the appanage methods and ideas which the Muscovite Tsars and the Great Russian community applied to the State organisation of united Great Rus. Only with difficulty could minds nourished on the idea of the princely *otchina*[1] and the customs of an appanage *ménage* assimilate national interests of the type which an *Imperial* government was called upon to guard. During the appanage period the idea of the nation as a moral and political union had become dissolved into ideas of territorial spheres belonging exclusively to Tverans, to Muscovites, to Novgorodians, and so forth, as well as into ideas of professional guilds constituted of boyars, of free servitors, of rural clergy, of non-free and semi-free "folk who do serve under a master," of cesspaying holders of State lands, and the like. Of extraneous sources from which suitable political notions might have been borrowed, or convenient models and examples taken, there were none. For Orthodox Great Rus the Catholic and Protestant Wests were too alien, too suspect, in their faiths, methods, and customs to be safely imitated, while Russia's ancient mistress in matters of religion, rhetoric, and court intrigue—Byzantium herself—had ceased to exist when the organisation of the Great Russian Empire was begun upon. Moreover, for Rus, the Byzantium of earlier days (as regarded in its political aspect) had never been anything but a decrepit, halting invalid engaged in giving first lessons in walking to an infant scarcely, as yet, able to stand upon its feet.

Of all the conditions present, the one least favourable to the organisation of an administrative system in the Muscovite Empire was the relation of the Tsar of Moscow to his chief administrative instrument, the boyars. The latter were, as a class, jealous, stubborn upholders of the appanage prejudices and traditions which they had brought with them to Moscow, and which they there had many unpleasant causes to remember. Such prejudices and traditions held out little promise of friendly co-operation in the task of elaborating an Imperial administration. As already seen, the relation between the two parties—Tsar and boyars—was, if not a direct, open struggle, at all events a profound antagonism or *neliubïe* (to use the term current in those days): and the Muscovite Government was organised at a time when

[1] *i.e.* The idea of an appanage being the hereditary manor of its prince.

that antagonism was striking ever deeper and deeper—when, indeed, it was becoming converted into a political fault so rooted that, under Ivan the Terrible, it actually threatened, on the part of that sinister ruler, to merge into anarchy. Was this unnatural relation of the chief organiser, the master builder, of the State to his nearest coadjutors in any way reflected in the work of organisation—in its course and characteristics?

Of that we can detect no sign. Although the edifice of Muscovite State organisation was reared, worked, and then reconstructed (a task wherein both Tsar and boyars took a hand), neither in the process of its building nor in the working of its administrative institutions can we discern traces of the existence of any discord between the artificers. Despite the fact that from the operations of the Muscovite administration of the sixteenth century there has come down to us a notable series of documents, even the closest study of those memorials would never lead one to suppose that the political forces by which that administrative activity was directed were in aught but permanent accord with one another. No; it was *behind* the scenes of government that the feud was waged. It was in the palace chambers of the Kremlin, in the mansions of the boyars, in the literature of the day, that the mutual accusations and complaints of the antagonists resounded. Political doctrines were preached, plans were devised for taking flight across the borders, genealogical scrolls were searched for justification of political claims and pretensions (justification sought to be obtained by appeal to shades of real or imaginary ancestors who should figure in the *rôle* of Cæsar Augustus); in a word, men wrangled, came to loggerheads, theorised, and sought for proof of their theories. Under Ivan IV. the Great Square of Moscow witnessed most of this political ferment, for there many a boyar, many a boyar's whole family, laid down their lives upon the block. Yet on the administrative stage itself all remained quiet. In chancellory and *prikaz*[1] neither argumentation nor theories found a place, but only business routine and writing—above all things, writing. In these institutions there went on a smooth, soundless work which owed its tendency to custom rather than to ideals. Evidently the scribes of the time who composed the State documents which have come down to us were men of practical business habits—men who knew their work thoroughly,

[1] Public office.

who were able to establish the forms and methods of an administrative system, and who valued a form when once established. Yes, they were men of routine rather than of theory—men whose personal political ideas and sympathies played no part in the elaboration of that routine, or of those administrative forms, or of that system. All that they did was done in the name, and by the command, of the "Tsar and Great Prince of All Rus." That is to say, although the will of the Sovereign figured as the paramount, the indisputable, motive power of the administrative machine, it was the national interest of "All Rus" that constituted the presumed—though unexpressed—the sole, the supreme, the universally recognised and comprehended object of the machine's working.

Such is the general impression to be derived from the State documents of the administrative departments which established and maintained the Muscovite order of State of the sixteenth century. Next let us enter into *details*, and picture to ourselves the administrative forms into which the social edifice of the Muscovite Empire of that day became moulded. Muscovite administration developed directly from the appanage administrative system: wherefore let us once more reconstruct the latter, and recall both the organisation of an appanage principality and the character of an appanage prince. As described in Chapter XVI. of the first volume of this work, an appanage principality was not so much a State as a *prince's manor*. In other words, a Russian State, at that period, was indistinguishable from a manorial property. Consequently an appanage administration was, first and foremost, an agency for exploiting the assets of such a manor, while the population of the appanage constituted, for its prince, not a community, nor a union of subjects formed for the attainment of given ends of public welfare and social order, but an instrument designed both to carry on and to be the object of the industrial working of the principality. Administrative agencies which had for their object the preservation of order and social decorum (I mean such agencies as the judiciary, the police, and the legislature) were looked upon as so many lucrative assets of the prince's manorial domain, and were combined with revenues which went to the use of the Government and its agents. Hence arose those judicial, mercantile marriage, and other fees which helped to fill the prince's treasury or served to support the various local governors of an appanage.

Such was the framework on which an appanage administration was built and maintained. The prime aim of the departments of an appanage administrative system was the extraction of revenue from the several classes of lands and agrarian rights contained in the principality: the persons who worked those lands being, as it were, *told off* to the rights attached to the same, as constituting the living mechanical force which could make the dead lands and agrarian rights industrially profitable. Also we have seen (in the chapter above quoted) that the lands in an appanage were divided, according to the relations of their holders to the prince, into three categories. Some lands were exclusively set apart for the prince's establishment, and worked independently on behalf of the prince, who drew from the same the proceeds necessary to maintain his court; other lands were made over, under certain conditions, to individuals and Church institutions, as private, privileged properties; while yet other lands were devoted—in return for certain fixed dues—to the use of burghers and peasantry. The first-named of these categories were known as court lands, the second either as boyaral or Church lands, and the third as cesspaying or "common" lands; while, just as these categories differed from one another, so there existed a distinction between the *central administration* and the *local administrations* in an appanage.

The headquarters of an appanage central administration were the prince's palace; different departments of which were entrusted to individual boyars and free servitors, or even to slaves in the prince's employ. Court attendants and court lands, with the appurtenances of the latter, were the province of the *boyarin dvoretski* or court boyar; the horses, stablemen, and *lugi* (grazing-paddocks) of the court were the province of a *boyarin koniushi* or "horse boyar"; while the appurtenances of the prince's *private* lands (bee forests, fisheries, and game preserves) were the province of court officials known as the *tchashnik*, the *stolnik*, and the *lovtchi*. Thus an appanage court evolved an entire system of administrative departments of purely manorial origin and purport. In official documents of the period the administrative heads posted to these departments appear as "*boyaré vvedennïe*" or "commissioned boyars," while their departments collectively formed the court or central administration of the principality. Administrative matters of more than ordinary importance which did not lie within the

competence of any given *boyarin vvedenni* were either delegated to *several* departments or removed altogether out of departmental jurisdiction, and referred for decision to the prince—whether in council with the heads of departments specially concerned or in council with the whole staff of acting boyars. Such matters—*i.e.* matters which called for consideration by a general council, including, sometimes, even the higher clergy — comprised questions of peace or war, the framing of the prince's will, the arranging of matrimonial alliances for individual members of his family, and so forth. This was the *kniazheskaia duma*, or prince's council, of the appanage period—a boyar assembly which, under the presidency of the prince, varied in its composition, and was convened only for consideration of some extraordinary matter which had been referred to the prince. Also it possessed none of the forms of a government institution to which we ourselves are accustomed—such forms as a charter, a permanent body of members, a precisely defined jurisdiction, an invariable order of procedure, clerical offices, protocols, and so forth. That is to say, it was not a *State* council, but the prince's customary method of taking the advice of his boyars on matters which transcended the ordinary. Nevertheless its deliberations—evoked as they were by cases periodically arising in administrative practice—gave rise to individual dispensations which, serving as precedents for like occasions in the future, became converted, through the mere force of repetition, into *general norms* or *laws*. This gave rise to the appanage legislature; of which the principal organ was the *boyarskaia duma* or council of boyars, with the prince at its head. In other words, the structure of an appanage central administration consisted of (1) a number of court departments, under "commissioned boyars," and (2) a boyar assembly composed either of two or three boyars or of all the boyars commissioned to departments.

Lands not set apart for the prince's court—*i.e.* lands either in private tenure or leased to peasants—formed the province of the various *local* administrations of an appanage. To such administrations was assigned everything in the principality which the prince's court did not itself exploit, and their direction was entrusted to officials who were known as *namiestniki* and *volosteli*.[1] Also, the larger appanage principalities were divided into administrative districts known as *uezdi* or

[1] See p. 204.

cantons—though the *uezd* was not an administrative area in our own sense of the term (*i.e.* an area subordinated to a single local authority or his agents), but an area composed of a town and a number of rural communes called *volosti* and *stani*.[1] Like the *volost*, the *stana* was a rural unit, but always one that lay either close into the cantonal town or actually within the *okologorodïe* or "town circuit" (to quote the expression found in documents of the period). In some cases, also, the larger *volosti* were divided into *stani*, and the larger *stani* into *volosti*. For instance, sixteenth-century registers show the then canton of Kolomna to have consisted of eleven *stani* and nine *volosti*. The chief town of a canton, with its attached *stani*, was administered by a *namiestnik*, and the cantonal *volosti* by a number of *volosteli*, who usually exercised their functions independently of the *namiestnik*. Only here and there was the *namiestnik* of a canton charged also with the judging of graver cases of crime which occurred in the *volosti* of his canton.

Both *namiestniki* and *volosteli* administered their units with the help of certain subordinates known as *tiuni* (deputy justices), *dovodchiki* (prosecuting attorneys), and *pravetchiki* (executors of legal decrees). Of these, the *dovodchiki* remind us, in some of their functions, of our modern *sudebnïe sliedovateli* (public prosecutors), and the *pravetchiki* of our modern *sudebnïe pristavi* (court warrant officers). Yet neither *tiuni*, *dovodchiki*, nor *pravetchiki* were government officials, but only household attendants in the employ of the *namiestnik* or the *volosteli*. The chief purpose of an appanage local administration was to extract revenue from the district which it administered. Every administrative act of a *namiestnik* or a *volostel*, as well as of his subordinates, was connected with a given impost; so that local administrations of the kind represented, not so much agencies designed for the maintenance of order and the upholding of the law, as sources of income—income-producing assets—conferred upon the officials by whom they were directed. In this sense the post of a local administrative official was not inaptly known as his *kormlenïe* or "feeding," since, in the very literal sense of the word, he *fed* himself at the expense of the administered. Such an official's principal means of support consisted of *kormi* and *poshlini*. *Kormi* were tolls periodically levied upon communes as a whole, and *poshlini* were fees paid by individuals for administrative

[1] See p. 204.

documents which they were required to possess. Of *kormi* there were three kinds—namely, tolls levied when a new local official entered upon his post, tolls levied once only, and tolls levied annually, at the seasons of Christmas, St. Peter's Day, and Eastertide. The first of these categories was, as I have said, levied on the arrival of an "incoming" official; on which occasion each inhabitant of the district "brought unto him" (*i.e.* to the new official) "whatsoever he might." The amounts of Christmas and other festival tolls[1] were fixed by written charters; which documents were either *ustavnia* (*i.e.* statutory, of the kind intended to cover whole districts) or *zhalovannia* (*i.e.* conferred, of the kind granted to individuals for the particular area which they were licensed to exploit). *Kormi* were assessed by *sochi*. The *socha* was a taxatory unit embracing either a given number of cesspaying urban holdings (the number being determined by the earning capacity of such holdings) or a given area of cesspaying peasant tillage which varied according to the quality of the soil and the class of its holders. During the Muscovite period the *socha*, both on *pomiestia* and *otchini*, consisted of 1200 *dessiatini* of good land (divided into three fields), 1500 *dessiatini* of medium land, and 1800 *dessiatini* of poor land, while on court, monasterial, and "common" lands the *socha* was smaller by from 25 to 37 per cent. Thus on monasterial or court lands a *socha* of good tillage averaged 900 *dessiatini*, and on "common" lands 750. On the other hand, the number of *dessiatini* of medium or poor land in *sochi* of this kind was proportionately greater. During the appanage period *kormi* were generally levied in kind. For example, a charter granted to the district of Bielozersk in 1488 fixes the Christmas *korm* to the *namiestnik* at a *polot*[2] of beef per *socha*, ten loaves of bread, and a cask of oatmeal. Similar, though smaller, *kormi* were levied for the benefit of *volosteli*, *tiuni*, and other subordinate officials of a local administration. Thus *kormi* were general contributory dues, fixed at a definite, permanent ratio according to local assessment. Another, and a no less lucrative, source of a *kormlentshik's* income was non-assessed dues known as *poshlini*. These comprised every species of mulct in suits-at law; and inasmuch as the administrative activity of a local administration was solely confined to police and judicial matters (*i.e.* to the detection of crime, to the prosecution of criminals, and to the dispensation of justice in civil and criminal cases), *poshlini* con-

[1] See p. 215.

[2] Side or baron.

sisted of (1) court payments (levied either at a given rate per cent. on the amount sued for or in a lump sum according to the penalty inflicted), (2) excise duties on the sale of merchandise, and (3) marriage fees payable on the nuptials of a local inhabitant, no matter whether the ceremony were performed in the district concerned or elsewhere (the *kormlentshik* receiving, in the former case, a piece of "wedding cloth," and, in the latter, a skin of fur). Let us take one example only —though one sufficiently comprehensive to give us a fair idea of the lucrative capabilities of a *kormlenïe* or local administrative post. During the Muscovite period—*i.e.* in 1528—an official named Kobiakov was awarded, as his *kormlenïe*, the *volost* of Solitza Malaia (a district devoted to salt-mining), and in the *zhalovannaia gramota* of the *volost* we find set down no fewer than fourteen income-producing assets, *kormi* and *poshlini* alike, without counting also the "incoming" *korm*. Of these assets the majority are assessed in terms of money: whence we see that, even reckoning on the smallest possible modern scale (wherever such reckoning is possible), Kobiakov received from the assets in question some 1350 roubles a year,—and this constituted less than half his income! At the same time, a *kormlentshik* did not apply the *whole* of these dues to his exclusive benefit—at all events so far as court lands *volosti* were concerned, since a portion of them went to the treasury, for the subsequent use of the prince and the central administrative officials or "commissioned boyars," who also had the use of revenues from their own posts. This is seen from the will of Simeon Gordii, who, in bequeathing his appanage to his wife, provided that those of his boyars who remained on in the widow's service, and administered *volosti*, should convey to their mistress one-half of the revenues which they derived from the districts which they administered.

Usually posts as *namiestniki* were given to more distinguished members of the official class—*i.e.* to boyars, and posts as *volosteli* to less distinguished, or free, servitors. In fact, a *kormlenïe* was not so much a payment for administrative work as a remuneration for court or military service imposed upon a given official, and performed by him without hope of reward. Remuneration of this kind formed one of the State servitor's principal means of support, and was distinct from a salary (in the modern sense of the term) through the fact that it was received from the population direct, instead of being paid out of the revenues of the public treasury of the State. Sometimes *kormlentshiki*

appear to have collected their *kormi* in person; for which purpose they made tours of their districts at the appointed seasons (the above-named festivals) in much the same manner that, at an earlier period in our history, the princes and their local representatives went the *poliudie*.[1] For us, with our modern social ideas, it is a difficult matter to divine the character and significance of these *kormi*-endowed posts—posts whose names strike so curiously upon the ear; but at all events we can discern a passable model of the ancient administrative tours of a *namiestnik* in the parish visitations which our clergy are accustomed to perform at festival times, and which, bequeathed to us from remote antiquity, take place at practically the same seasons as in days of old. *Kormlenia* answered both to the prevalent system of paying officials in kind and to the service position and social ideas of the military-official class. Had all the dues assigned for the maintenance of a local administration been centralised in one spot, and one spot only, appanage treasuries would have come to resemble so many meat, bread, and hay depots, while the produce accumulated in them would have been ruined long before it had reached the hands of the consumer. For the same reason, as well as for the reason that the supply of monetary tokens was unequal to the demand, periodical payment of dues was found to be more convenient than payment at short intervals. An official who squandered his substance during a term of service could recoup himself with a year or two's duty as a *namiestnik* or a *volostel*, and then, with rehabilitated means, return to the capital and service proper (*i.e.* to some non-endowed military or other post) until such time as it again fell to his turn to be awarded a *kormlenie* by his master. Like the modern salary, the appanage *kormlenie* was a means for performance of service: yet between the ancient and the modern view of the relation of that means to the activity with which it was connected there was an essential difference. For the *kormlentshik* his administrative labours served merely as an expedient for the acquisition of the income which constituted the true end of the *kormlenie*, and the official also of to-day is usually disposed to look upon his salary as the ultimate object of his post, and upon his official labours as a mere pretext for the receipt of that salary: yet over and above this degraded professional view of modern remuneration there rises the idea of service as a means of benefiting the public weal and of meeting the needs

[1] See vol. i. p. 79.

and interests of the people, while the salary attached to a given post is customarily looked upon as the statutorily assessed compensation for the labour, knowledge, time, and expense which, in such measure as may be demanded by the State, the official offers as a sacrifice to his Sovereign and country, even as the private citizen offers, indirectly and according to his means, taxes designed to the same end.

The relation existing between the centre and the local districts of an appanage prevented an appanage administration from resembling any *fundamental* administrative system, since it connoted neither centralisation nor local self-government. Under the *namiestniki* and *volosteli* to whom the prince delegated practically the whole of his authority over two out of the three classes of lands which his principality comprised (and that without any responsibility, control, or statutory commission to the same) the activity of local officials remained imperceptible and slight in its influence: with the result that the centre, left charged with the care only of *one* out of the three categories of lands, itself came to figure as an area which had no connection with its fellows save in the person of the prince. Yet, in proportion as the Principality of Moscow underwent conversion into a Great Russian Empire, there arose within it new governmental problems which rendered the disadvantages of the appanage system increasingly manifest; until at length it became necessary to reform both the central and the local administrations. Of the former the reconstruction began with the court departments. Hitherto each department of the kind had been a "one-man," temporary sphere under the direction of the particular "commissioned boyar" to whom the prince saw fit to entrust that portion of his court *ménage*. Now, however, individual commissions to leading boyars became complex, permanent presidential posts, while the departments themselves acquired the name of *izbi* or *prikazi*, and became converted into institutions largely resembling our modern ministries or ministerial chancellories. Of these *prikazi* during the process of their conversion from personal commissions into general departments or permanent institutions we have a picture in the *Sudebnik* of 1497. While authorising boyars and *okolnichi*[1] to dispense justice, and appointing certain *diaki* or clerks to act as their assistants, it forbade such officials to accept either "pleadings" (in modern parlance, briefs), or posts supernumerary to their judicial functions. Also, such officials were

[1] See p. 258.

to award redress to all and sundry who should require the same, save that any suitor whom "it be unbefitting for a *sudia* to judge" (*i.e.* whose case lay beyond the competence of a *sudia*) was to have his suit referred either to the Suzerain Prince or to a court "whereunto men who have due authority shall be appointed." The *sudi* here mentioned are the officials who, in later days, became known as *nachalniki prikazov*, or heads of *prikazi*. Each of them had his own staff of clerks, secretary, offices, and class of business. Also, the relation of the *prikazi* to the supreme power underwent definition. Henceforth legal cases which did not lie within the jurisdiction of a *sudia*, but called for some legislative decision, were to be forwarded to the Suzerain Prince as the legislative power. Yet in the *Sudebnik* we do not find *all* traces of the old system of temporary, personal commissions obliterated. For instance, the code forbids the *sudia* of a *prikaz* to remain what he had hitherto been—namely, a pleader in private and local suits for a stipulated fee. At the same time, another article in the code makes it clear that, if necessary, cases referred to the tribunal of the Suzerain Prince might be decided by certain persons "unto whom the Suzerain Prince shall commit the same." Evidently these persons were *ad hoc* departmental assessors (*prikastchiki*), commissioned for a given occasion only: wherefore the *Sudebnik* of 1497 places beyond doubt the epoch when *prikazi* first arose —the time when the passage from administration through individuals to administration through institutions finally became accomplished. Yet this passage was not a sudden replacing of one administrative system by another one founded on different principles, but a change, rather, of a technical—or, more correctly speaking, of a bureaucratic—order. In other words, *prikazi* represented a gradual development or fusion of the old court departments. During the fourteenth century the non-complex character of the prince's *ménage* allowed of some of its branches being directed by a single individual, who acted principally through word of mouth, and resorted for written regulations to the, as yet, comparatively small general staff of State clerks. In proportion, however, as the State's establishment grew more complex, administrative functions became increasingly diffuse, and clerical work increasingly voluminous. This necessitated each "commissioned boyar" having assigned him his own office, his own clerk, amanuenses, secretary, and assistant secretaries, as well as, in some cases, a colleague for joint transaction of business; and as soon as ever a staff of this sort had become formed in a given

department, that department developed into a *prikaz* or permanent institution, and the old personal commission awarded to an *appanage* courtier became a public office under a *bolshoi dvoretz* or "*great* courtier"—the department of the erstwhile plain *boyarin koniushi*[1] henceforth figuring as the *Koniushenni Prikaz* or "*General Prikaz* of the Horse," and so forth. Yet, side by side with *prikazi* born of the old court departments, there arose new *prikazi* for which no corresponding functions had existed at an appanage court. These new institutions owed their origin to new demands of State life—to the fact that, on the one hand, there arose administrative tasks which it was impossible to fit into the narrow framework of a court *ménage*, and, on the other hand, that there began to be felt an ever-increasing need for centralisation of administrative business which hitherto had lain at the uncontrolled discretion of district administrative officials. This led to a great accumulation of administrative business at the governmental centre, and so to the gradual rise, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, of a series of new *prikazi*. During the appanage period the prince's external relations had been sufficiently simple in their character to admit of their being directed by the prince alone, and without the help of any individual specially appointed for the purpose. That is to say, questions of external policy had been decided by the prince either on his own initiative or with the advice of the "commissioned boyars." In proportion, however, as the external relations of the Muscovite Empire became more complex, there arose in Moscow a new *prikaz* which acquired the name of the *Posolskaia Izba*, or "Office of Ambassadors" (in modern parlance, "the Ministry for Foreign Affairs"), while in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—the time when the official class was increasing rapidly, and wars were growing more and more frequent—military affairs and the military-official class generally became placed under a special department known as the *Razriad* or *Razriadni Prikaz*. Lastly, the growth of service landownership led to the rise of a *Pomiestni Prikaz* or *Prikaz* of *Pomiestia*. These, however, constituted but *one* section of the new *prikazi* which owed their origin to the growth of the central government, since another section arose which owed its origin to *administrative centralisation*. During the appanage period a large amount of local administrative business had lain in the uncontrolled hands of local officials, but now the interests of the State

[1] See p. 246.

demanded that some definite supervision should be established over the doings of *kormlentshiki*. For instance, hitherto the *namiestniki* and *volosteli* of an appanage had had charge of all criminal cases. As time went on, however, the graver offences were removed out of their jurisdiction, and a central criminal department was formed which became known as the *Razboini Prikaz* or *Prikaz* of Felonies. Again, hitherto local administrative officials had dealt with all matters affecting slaves, but henceforth such matters were placed under a central department known as the *Kholopii Prikaz*. Thus new *prikazi* became added, in mosaic fashion, to the older departments, until by the close of the sixteenth century the complex edifice of the *prikaznaia administratsia* of Moscow had become formed. This *administratsia* included in its scope no fewer than thirty departments, and was reared in much the same way that the Imperial palaces of Moscow were built—namely, by having new porticos, storeys, attics, lights, wings, and traverses added to the main structure, according as the Imperial family and establishment increased.

From the foregoing it will be seen that the Muscovite *prikazi* were of three-fold origin. Some of them developed from the old court departments of the appanage period; others of them owed their inception to new administrative problems due to the formation of the Muscovite Empire; while yet others were born of a desire to centralise the more important administrative business. A task of greater difficulty confronts us when we come to attempt a grouping of those institutions according to the nature of the transactions comprised within their several jurisdictions. The fact that they did not arise suddenly or on a single plan, but made their appearance gradually, and according as the increased complexity of administrative problems demanded, causes us, whose eyes are accustomed to strict regulation of public business, and to exact apportionment of operations in accordance with their tenour, to look upon the relative participation of *prikazi* in administrative matters as an extremely tangled and irregular affair. In the allotment of public business Muscovite statesmen were governed less by political principles than by practical convenience. For example, we can discern no trace of the idea of separating legal business from administrative. Although there existed four special *prikazi* for dealing with civil litigation (namely, in Moscow, Vladimir, Dmitrov, and Riazan), legal business (including civil

causes) seems to have been transacted also in *prikazi* of a purely administrative character. According to the class of business dealt with, we may divide *prikazi* into two principal categories, just as Nevolin divided them in the forties of the last century. The first of those categories consisted of *general prikazi*. These had charge of all matters of State relating to the Empire at large—or at all events, to the greater portion of it. To this category belonged the *Posolski Prikaz*, the *Razriadni Prikaz*, the *Razboini Prikaz*, the *Kholopii Prikaz*, and the *Prikaz Bolshovo Prichoda* (the latter the department which administered the *bolshoi prichod* or "great incoming"—*i.e.* main revenues—of the State, more especially revenues of a non-taxatory order). Another group of *prikazi* consisted of institutions to which we may apply the term "territorial," since, though they dealt with general matters, they did so only in given portions of the Empire. Indeed, the majority of *prikazi* belonged to this class. Instances of it are to be seen in the *Kazanski Dvoretz*, or "Court[1] of Kazan"—a department instituted after the conquest of the Khanate for administering the old Tartar strongholds of Kazan, Astrakhan, and Siberia; in the "Court of Siberia" (subsequently separated from the last-named); and in certain local "courts" which, under the direction of a central *prikaz*, administered affairs in localities of the Empire which formerly had been independent principalities or provinces (examples of this are Novgorod and Tver). Yet this grouping of Muscovite *prikazi* cannot be looked upon as wholly a full and concise one. Even experts on the subject have failed to achieve a systematic classification of them, even as their actual creators—the Tsars of Moscow themselves—were unsuccessful in this respect. For us it is a more important matter to determine the extent to which the number of those institutions became multiplied or diminished by the addition or subtraction of administrative branches: in which connection the comparative attention paid them by the government of the day will serve at once as an index and as a standard, not only of the political sense of the age, but also of the State's most pressing necessities. This reckoning we may extend to the *prikazi* of the *seventeenth* century, since the character of the Muscovite State organisation changed very little even under the new dynasty, and many of the *prikazi* which appear for the first time in documents of that century existed either certainly or probably at an

[1] *i.e.* Office. Compare the modern British "India Office," *etcetera*.

earlier period. Of them we may assign fifteen to the military administration, ten to the State lands department, and thirteen to various "courts." This view of Muscovite organisation will give us at least an idea of the then tendency of Muscovite administrative activity, since it reveals the fact that special efforts were directed not only to the ordering of those administrative branches which specially concerned the Empire, but also to the enlarging of the appanage or Kremlin setting wherein the Tsar and his enormous court establishment found themselves fixed. Yet in the broad sphere of internal order and management—the sphere which most concerned the needs and interests of the people—we meet only with *twelve* public institutions; some of which (for instance, the *Aptekarski Prikaz* and the *Knigopechatni Prikaz*—respectively the Office of Apothecaries and the Office of Book-Printing) were small departments which possessed a very limited circle of activity, while others were institutions designed merely to cater for the needs either of the capital or of the administration. Of this class we have examples in the two *Zemskie Dvori* (Lands Offices) of the city of Moscow, in the Police Commission for the same city, and in that Department of Posts which, from the early sixteenth century onwards, we know to have been charged with the distribution of administrative documents and the transport of officials travelling on government business. As for solicitude for the common weal, for the upkeep of the means of communication, for the health of the people, for the popular food supply, for the supervision of the community, for the furtherance of trade and industry, or for popular education,—none of these elementary conditions of social prosperity found any direct organs in the structure of administration through *prikazi;* while from the Church—or to speak more correctly, from the *dignitaries* of the Church, in so far as the public weal affected them—the State received no encouragement or support in matters of this kind. We have seen in Chapter XI. how coldly the Council of the *Stoglav* received the question of public charity when submitted to it by the Tsar; nor did a *Prikaz Stroenia Bogadielen*, or "Department for the Management of Almshouses," arise before the latter half of the seventeenth century—and then only on the initiative, and at the expense, of the Sovereign. Nay, the fulfilment of their own decree for the institution of urban Church schools seems to have concerned the fathers of the *Stoglav* but little,

despite the fact that they themselves had ordered it to be done, and that they had at their disposal ample material means for the purpose. Thus the governments both of the State and of the Church demanded everything from the people, and gave nothing—or, at all events, next to nothing—in return. Yet, while to expect much from them during the sixteenth century would have meant an anticipation of their period, our determination of the absence of what it would have been *desirable* for them to give fixes beyond dispute the extent of their political growth and the measure of their internal social and moral strength.

The activities of the *prikazi* were summed up in a single administrative institution which controlled all departments and was known as the *Boyarskaia Duma* or Council of Boyars. During the appanage period (as we have seen) the prince's assembly was composed only of those boyars (generally few in number) whom the prince summoned to help him when dealing with matters of more than ordinary importance. Now, however, the *Boyarskaia Duma* lost that restricted, variable composition, and developed into a permanent, complex institution possessed of a constant *personnel* and a well-defined sphere of activity. Formerly all higher officials and leading servitors in an appanage assembly had borne the title of "boyars"; but when, in the Muscovite Empire, the boyar order became sundered into a number of *strata* differing alike in their origin and in their political importance there took place, in the *personnel* of the Boyar Council, a corresponding division into a number of hierarchical ranks which answered to the genealogical status of the councillors. For example, representatives of the greater boyar families still sat in the new *Duma* under their old title of "boyars," but boyars of the *secondary* grade (*i.e.* descendants of the old non-titled Muscovite boyar families [1]) entered the Council under the name of *okolnichi*—though in some cases they attained eventually to prime boyar rank. Again, the reign of the Tsar Vassilii Ivanovitch (or, perhaps, even an earlier period) saw arise among the members of the Council a *third* new grade; which, though at first known as "sons of boyars who hold sittings in the *Duma*," subsequently had its title abbreviated to the more simple one of *dumnïe dvoriané*, or "gentry of the *Duma*." As a rule, councillors of this class were public servants who attained councillor rank either from among the mass of the more obscure boyar families or from among that of

[1] See p. 43.

dvoriané who did not belong to the boyar order proper. Hence, among these State councillors, ranks represented the different *strata* of the official class which arose during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Lastly, the *Duma* numbered among its members certain *dumnïe diaki* (clerks of the Council), State secretaries, and *dokladchiki* (reporters). Under its new organisation, therefore, the *Boyarskaia Duma* consisted, not of some three or four "commissioned boyars" only (as during the appanage period), but of several scores of members who all bore different titles. Members of the Council were appointed thereto by the Tsar. Among them we can distinguish two elements, the aristocratic and the bureaucratic. Boyars and *okolnichi* consisted mostly of senior representatives of the leading boyar families — of State servitors who, as soon as they had attained a given age, were accorded a summons to the *Duma* in conformity with *miestnichestvo* customs and relations. On the other hand, *dumnïe dvoriané* and *dumnïe diaki* were mostly men of humble origin who received appointment to the Council at the discretion of the Tsar, and in recognition either of personal merits or of personal services to the State. Yet this was an element of little note or importance, since up to the very close of the sixteenth century the *Duma* remained strictly boyar and aristocratic in its composition. Also, the governmental importance of men of councillor rank was not confined to the mere fact of their session on the *Duma*. Though all members of the official class—whether boyars, *okolnichi*, or mere "gentry of the Duma"—were entitled by their class membership to be members also of the State Council, and to rank collectively as *dumnïe liudi* or "men of the Duma," they also administered *prikazi*, commanded troops in the field, and governed provinces in the capacity of *namiestniki* or *voievodi*.[1] At the same time, seeing that the *voievoda* of a military command or the *namiestnik* of a provincial district could not well be in constant attendance in the metropolitan *Duma*, the daily sittings of that body were frequented mostly by *sudi*, or heads of metropolitan *prikazi*—men whose duties, of course, bound them strictly to the capital. Even *dumnïe diaki* or clerks of the *Duma* were not exclusively secretaries and reporters, but administered, in each case, a *prikaz*. Inasmuch, too, as these *diaki* were chief clerks or superintendents only of the *more important* departments—such departments as the *Posolski Prikaz*,

[1] Civil or military governors.

the *Razriadni Prikaz*, and the *Pomiestni Prikaz* (also, in some cases, of the Novgorodian *Razriad*[1] and the "Court of Kazan")—the average number of clerical members of the Council amounted only to some three or four. Matters relating to embassies, to *razriadi*,[2] or to *pomiestia* the Council dealt with independently; wherefore the *prikazi* mostly concerned by these matters constituted virtual departments of the *Duma's* main chancellory, and were under *diaki* instead of under boyars or *okolnichi*. Among the *prikazi* pride of place went to the *Bolshoi Razriad*, or Great *Razriad*, of Moscow, since that institution was charged not only with the making of all military appointments, but also with the duty of communicating to its fellow *prikazi* all dispositions by the Tsar or his Council which in any way affected those institutions. Likewise it was its duty to lay before the *Duma* any matters which had been referred to the Tsar over the heads of *prikazi:* wherefore a clerk in the *Bolshoi Razriad* who also held a seat on the *Duma* ranked practically as a Secretary of State, while the permanent presence on the Council of heads of the leading *prikazi* communicated to that assembly the significance of a Council of Ministers. Yet, while the *Duma* dealt with a wide circle of legal and administrative business, it was above all things a *legislative* institution. Every new law issued from the *Duma* under the stereotyped *formula:* "Thus hath the Tsar commanded and the boyars have ordained." This was because the legislative importance of the *Duma* had come to rest, not only upon ancient custom, but also upon a basis afforded by the *Sudebnik* of 1550; one article of which ran: "New matters which have been not inscribed in this present *Sudebnik*, but shall be ordained hereafter by the ascription of the Tsar and the ordering of the boyars, shall be added unto this *Sudebnik*." Consequently a decision of the *Duma's* had all the force of an *ukaz* supplementary to that code. Furthermore, the *Duma* supervised the work of the various *prikazi*, and exercised control over the provincial administrations. Also, it decided certain legal cases, as a court of highest or sole instance. Making the Tsar's palace (*i.e.* the Kremlin), or wherever else the Tsar might be, their place of session, the members of the Council would assemble in the early morning (in summer at sunrise, and in winter even before daylight) and not only continue sitting through the five or six hours between matins and mass, but

[1] Office of Military Affairs. [2] Military appointments.

also, in some cases, meet again at eventide, when the *dumnïe liudi*, refreshed with a post-prandial sleep, would repair, at the first stroke of the bell to vespers, to the Imperial palace. When actually in session, the councillors ranged themselves according to *ranks* (*okolnichi* taking their places next below the boyars, and so on), while members of the same rank disposed themselves according to *birth*—*i.e.* in proper *miestnichestvo* order. *Diaki* always remained standing, unless specially invited to be seated by the Tsar. Likewise a sitting always opened with the command, "Take ye your seats unto affairs" (or, if the Tsar were not present in person, with the bidding, "Hearken ye unto affairs from the boyars"); while to present a report to the *Duma* meant "to enter with affairs into the upper rooms where do sit the boyars" (this because the living and reception rooms of the palace were known collectively as *verchom* or "above"). The *Duma* seldom *of itself* initiated such questions as were subject to its jurisdiction: more usually the legislative initiative proceeded either from above or from below the Council, not from the Council's midst. Ordinary business was submitted for its consideration by the heads of the *prikazi* concerned, according to their several departments; but anything not transmissible to the *Duma* by a *prikaz*, or not included in the current routine of *prikazi*, was laid before the Council by the Tsar himself, whose prerogative it was to take the initiative in all the more important matters of external policy or internal State management. Sometimes the Sovereign presided in person over sittings of the *Duma*, while at other times he commissioned the boyars to "sit without him" for dealing with some particular matter. Again, if he chanced to be absent, and the boyars found themselves unable to arrive at a final decision on a given point—*i.e.* if they found themselves confronted with something "which they were not able to perfect for lack of an *ukaz* from the Tsar"—a report on the subject was forwarded to the absent ruler; but if, on the other hand, the mere fact of the Tsar's absence did not debar the boyars assembled in council from arriving at a definite conclusion on a legislative point, their decree issued with the force of a law, even though it had not been previously submitted to the Sovereign for his assent. Such was the *Duma's* ordinary legislative procedure. In initiating a debate, in the name of the Sovereign, on a proposed new law, the head of a *prikaz* always did so in the stereotyped *formula:* "What doth the Great Tsar command concerning this matter?"; while, in the event

of the Tsar not disposing of a given question (whether alone or with his boyars), he (the Tsar) addressed an *ukaz* to the said boyars to debate the point, and their decree issued as a law. A preliminary *ukaz* by the Tsar which, in its turn, became a legislative proposition; a boyar decree,—such were the two indispensable stages of the legislative process which found expression in the *formula* "Thus hath the Tsar commanded and the boyars have ordained." A third stage—namely, the Sovereign's confirmation of a boyaral decree in cases where he had been absent from the debate on the same—constituted a mere accident or exception. Of boyaral decrees submitted for the assent of the absent Sovereign there would appear to have been two kinds—namely, (1) decrees concerning *miestnichestvo* questions and (2) decrees concerning penalties for the graver criminal offences (the revision of which usually involved either a commutation or a diminution of the sentence). Sometimes (*i.e.* on occasions of more than ordinary importance) the customary composition of the *Duma* was extended to include an extraneous administrative factor in the shape of the head of the Russian Hierarchy—whether alone or in company with the higher clergy (*i.e.* the bishops). This supreme ecclesiastical dignitary (who, up to the close of the sixteenth century, was the Metropolitan, and, after that period, the Patriarch), constituted, with the episcopate, a special administrative council which became known as the Holy Synod and had charge of the affairs of the Russian Church. Acting either independently of, or in company with, or under the direction of, the State *Duma*, joint or subordinate action on its part was evoked only by questions closely affecting the State's interests or matters of State which involved also the jurisdiction of the Church. To decide such questions joint sittings of the *Duma* and the Synod were held: which gatherings went by the name of *sobori* or conventions, and were altogether distinct from *lay* sittings of the *Duma*.

Although the *dumnie diaki* embodied the deliberations of the Council in protocols or "records of State sittings concerning lay *ukazi*," this practice does not seem to have been the invariable rule, since no such "records" have come down to us from the sixteenth century, but only detailed notes of *miestnichestvo* suits which had been debated by the *Duma* and then reserved for further consideration. Moreover, the *diaki* only docketed decrees of the *Duma's* which subsequently underwent formulation into *ukazi* or *zakoni* (laws). Of this

I will cite a seventeenth-century example which will make clear to us not only the relation of a docket to an *ukaz*, but also the administrative temperament of the age. To a careless report sent in by a slovenly *voievoda* we find affixed the docket "To be dismissed with dishonour," and then the same docket worked up into an *ukaz* beginning with the following suggestive words: "O fool without understanding, thou art but an evil *voievoda!* Thou dost so write that," *etcetera, etcetera.* This lack of protocols leaves us in ignorance of much that was debated in the *Duma*, as well as of the manner in which its decrees were composed: yet we none the less know that in the *Duma* there took place not only ordinary debates, but also arguments or "encounters" with the Tsar. Of Ivan III. it was said that he enjoyed such "encounters," and rewarded those who were responsible for them,[1] but his son Vassilii was far less submissive to and tolerant of other men's opinion, and the conversations between Bersen Beklemishev and Maxim the Greek to which I have alluded[1] show us that, on one exceptionally stormy occasion, Vassilii even drove his refractory opponent from the council chamber, and laid his court ban upon him. In fact, during disturbed periods (due to the warnings of the court factions) debate waxed so hot in the Council that—to quote an old chronicle—there ensued "much upbraiding, and great crying aloud and noise, and many scornful words." Yet these occasions were rare and exceptional instances, since the customary order of procedure in the *Duma* was remarkable for its strict formality and the continuity of its forms and relations. At all events, such is the impression to be derived from surviving memorials of the *Duma's* activity. In its organisation, in its authority, and in its regular order of procedure the assembly would seem to have been founded upon a steady mutual confidence between president[2] and members—to have been a witness to the fact that between Sovereign and boyars there could exist no real divergency of interests, since the two political forces were firmly cemented together, and used to acting in concert and marching hand in hand, as being incapable of or ignorant of any other mode of progression. True, collisions there were, but they passed the *Duma* by, and found only faint reflection in its organisation and procedure. True, quarrels there were, but it was over questions of authority rather than over questions of policy that they raged—it was practical views rather than poli-

[1] See p. 63.

[2] *i.e.* the Tsar.

tical claims which clashed with one another. The very historical *genesis* of the Boyars' *Duma* prevented it from ever becoming an arena of political strife, since daily the Sovereign transacted administrative business without the help of the boyar assembly, and daily the boyar assembly transacted business without any participation therein by the Sovereign. Yet this circumstance was due to considerations of administrative convenience rather than to the question of respective political rights and prerogatives. That is to say, it constituted a division of labour rather than a delimiting of authority. Only in the case of Bersen[1] do we see a spark of nervous irritability struck from this soundless, close-locked laboratory of Muscovite State order and decorum. Every man in the Boyar Assembly seems to have known his place by rank and birth; the value of every man seems to have been appraised for him in terms of intellect. The very guise of the Council would appear to show that, in such a relaxing setting, no room could exist for political passions and abstractions, or for men who entertained the idea of a struggle for place and power, but that, on the contrary, individuals and parties, with their selfish or self-interested ends, must yield to the urgency of State interests and the pressure of political expediency or custom. The same character marked the activity of the Muscovite *prikazi*. In the aggregate of departments which arose at different times, and on no general plan, and according only to the needs and indications of the moment, there reigned much confusion and bustle, there took place a vast expenditure of time and paper, and there was perpetrated an abundance of administrative errors: yet never at any time was so much as an echo of the political struggle heard within those institutions, for the reason that most of them were directed by men who, though holding seats on the Boyar Council, were as moderate, loyal councillors in the latter as they were obedient, methodical workers in the former.

[1] See p. 61

CHAPTER XV

Changes in the provincial administration of the Muscovite Empire—The regulation of *kormlenia—Doklad*, or "reference" of legal cases, and *sudnie mushi*—A *guba* criminal administration—Its composition, jurisdiction, and legal process—Its nature and significance—Two questions concerning the same—The relation of such an administration to the local *kormlentshik*—Local administrative reform—Its cause—The introduction of local institutions—The jurisdiction and responsibility of local authorities—"*Na vieru*" administration—The character and significance of the local reforms introduced by Ivan IV.

I HAVE now described the changes which took place in the central administration of the Muscovite Empire from the middle of the fifteenth century onwards. It is not difficult to discern the general tendency of that administrative reorganisation. During the appanage period the central Government was a purely court Government—one that acted, as it were, as protector and bodyguard to the personal and industrial interests of the appanage prince; but from the middle of the fifteenth century it began to emerge beyond the restricted sphere of a princely or court *ménage*, and to accommodate its forms to demands of a public or State nature, and to undertake tasks which were bound up with the public weal. It must be understood that this change was not the result of any *break* in the political ideas of the Muscovite Sovereign and the Muscovite ruling class. Rather it was that those political ideas themselves underwent a change, under the influence of the administrative reorganisation rendered necessary by the course of affairs—rendered necessary by what is known as the force of circumstances. This process of what I might term "historical wringing-out" of new theories found its clearest expression in the changes which, with the middle of the fifteenth century, set in in the *provincial* administration of the Muscovite Empire. In this respect all the new demands made by the State, all the administrative institutions and relations which now became established, reveal two novel and unprecedented ideas—namely, that between general and local interests, between the centre and the provinces, there existed a distinction, and

that it was necessary to establish some supervision over provincial authorities, and to organise means for the due regulation of their activity. True these ideas were, as yet, of a primitive and elementary character—ideas which, to our own eyes, seem mere partial experiments: yet they were also ideas which gradually coalesced into a general plan which had for its aim the restriction, in the first instance, and the total abolition, in the second, of *kormlenia*. Thus those local administrative posts which hitherto had represented the appanage method of supporting the prince's military servitors became converted into local organs of a central Government.

In the progress of this reorganisation we can distinguish three principal stages. The first stage is marked by the fact that the central Government began (1) more exactly to define, through legislative means, those rights and responsibilities of local administrators which owed their origin to custom or to practice and (2) to restrict, through regulation of *kormlenia*, the irresponsible powers of *kormlentshiki*. Of this reorganisation of local government evidence is to be found both in the general ordinances of the First and Second *Sudebniki* and in the local charters which the central power now began to confer upon whole provinces, as well as upon individual urban and rural communities. The very appearance of those ordinances and charters at this period shows us that the central power was now awake to the necessity of defending the interests of the local populations from the caprice of its (the central power's) own agents—that it had begun to recognise its calling as the guardian of the general welfare. Henceforth, on appointment to a *kormlenïe*, a *kormlentshik* (whether a *namiestnik* or a *volostel*) received a list of items or revenues—a sort of tariff schedule, in fact—which precisely defined his perquisites, both *kormi* and *poshlini*. Also, his *kormi* in kind now became transmuted into *kormi* in money. Thus a charter granted to the district of Bielozersk in 1488 makes it clear that from that date onwards the local *namiestnik* received, as his Christmas *korm*, not ten loaves or rolls of bread per *socha*,[1] but ten *dengi* (about five roubles); not a load of hay, but two *altini* (about six roubles); and so on. Also, *kormlentshiki* were forbidden, in future, to make personal collection of their *kormi* from the population, but required to delegate that duty to certain officials elected by the local communities themselves—in towns and suburban *stani* to *sotskïe*, and

[1] See p. 249.

in other provincial units to *starosti*. Lastly, the *duration* of *kormlenia* became more exactly defined. In the sixteenth century the Muscovite Government seems to have been anxious to shorten that duration, and during the period of the Second *Sudebnik kormlenia* of a term of one year were the general rule—though in a few instances, also, we meet with *kormlenia* of two, or even of three, years' duration. These measures limited the activity of *namiestniki* and *volosteli*, as holders of *kormlenia*, by regularising their relations to the communities which supported them: with the result that those measures tended to prevent, or, at all events, to mitigate, any causes of mutual discontent or collision which might arise between the two parties.

To the second stage in the reform of local administration may be attributed those measures whereby attempts were made to invest *kormlentshiki* with the character of local governors in the *Imperial* sense of the word—chiefly by abolishing their judicial-administrative functions. These measures sought to restrict the freewill of a *kormlentshik*, and the scope of his authority, by removing out of his jurisdiction all the more important matters of administration: which restriction was effected principally by establishing a dual supervision over the activity of such officials—namely, a supervision from above and a supervision from below. Supervision from above took the form of *doklad* or "reference"; which was the name given, in ancient Russian documents, to the removal of criminal or administrative business from the courts of *kormlentshiki* to courts of higher instance, or from subordinate departments of administration to departments competent to give final decisions—to give what those old documents term "fulfilments." *Doklad*, therefore, led both to the removal of a great volume of administrative business out of the control of *prikazi*, for transmission to "higher places" (*i.e.* to the *Boyarskaia Duma* or to the cabinet of the Tsar himself), and to the subjection of *kormlentshiki* to an obligation to "refer" certain legal cases to the *prikazi* of the centre. A local administrative official only made *preliminary investigation* into a case—the final decision of it lay with some metropolitan institution, whether a suitable *prikaz* or the *Boyarskaia Duma* itself, wherein procedure would be regulated solely by correctitude and precedent. Thus the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries saw an immense quantity of business which had hitherto been locally transacted "referred" from *kormlentshiki* to the central departments, and a first limitation placed

thereby upon the powers of such officials. From the First *Sudebnik* we see that, during the latter half of the fifteenth century, only a few *namiestniki* and *volosteli* were bound to "refer" matters relating to slavery or to the graver cases of crime (brigandage, murder, larceny, and the receiving of stolen goods) to the capital; while, on the other hand, the Second *Sudebnik* shows us that, later, this limitation became extended to cover *all* such officials. Similarly, the close of the fifteenth century saw almost all civil suits decided at the centre, and not in the provinces. On the other hand, the judicial activity of *namiestniki* and *volosteli* became subject to supervision by representatives of the local communities. Though surviving Acts of the appanage period give us a picture of such organs of an appanage prince's rule as were represented by the *namiestniki* and *volosteli* of those days, in few of those Acts do we catch a glimpse of the order of authorities wherein the *self-acting* powers of the local communities found expression. Yet from earliest times both towns and suburban *stani* had been accustomed to elect their own *sotskïe* or prefects, and rural *volosti* their own *starosti* or headmen.[1] What the actual status of such local functionaries may have been we cannot well determine from the governmental documents of the appanage period, but in all probability they were charged with the management of the industrial affairs of their units, and the protection of those units from "villainous men" (*i.e.* thieves and malefactors). At all events, the consolidation of Muscovite Rus saw these locally elected officials begin to be charged also with matters of *State* import. That is to say, local *sotskïe*, *starosti*, and *okladchiki* (tax-assessors) now became entrusted both with the apportionment of fiscal dues and obligations and with the collection of the *kormi* which went to support the administrative officials of the central Government. Likewise old custom may have assigned to these locally elected authorities a certain judicial status —*i.e.* the right of transacting, within their own units, such legal business as did not enter into the jurisdiction of *kormlentshiki*. At all events, despite the fact that no surviving Act of the latter half of the fifteenth century furnishes evidence of any such status—whether as regards any separate jurisdiction of locally elected functionaries or as regards any participation by them in the dispensing of justice in the courts of the *kormlentshiki*, there can be no doubt that from that time

[1] See vol. i. pp. 63, 89, 115, *etcetera*.

onwards local institutions began to take an increasingly active part in the work of general and legal administration. First of all, local elective officials were attached to the tribunals of *namiestniki* and *volosteli*. Both the First *Sudebnik* and certain local charters of its period are found prescribing that in the courts of provincial *kormlentshiki* there shall sit *sotskie*, *starosti*, and certain persons dubbed *dobrie liudi* ("honourable" or "most honourable men"), who were the equivalent of the modern jury. To these the *Sudebnik* adds an elective official who was to have charge of all prison and other government buildings in certain towns, and to confirm all such civil transactions as the transference of immoveable property from one hand to another. In summoning these *sudnie muzhi* or "men of judgement" (so these locally-elected officials were collectively termed) to the courts of *kormlentshiki*, the law either re-established or generalised an ancient popular custom whereby a juridical act needed to be completed in the presence of witnesses before it could be certified as authentic and actual. The original status of *sudnie muzhi* was, therefore, that they sat in the courts of *kormlentshiki* as supervisory or assistant justices. Likewise, in the event of a case being investigated by a *namiestnik* or a *volostel*, and thereafter "referred" to a court of higher instance in which one of the parties disputed the *sudni spissok*, or protocol, of the judge of first instance, a *starosta* and some of his fellow *sudnie muzhi* had to be summoned to take formal note whether the procedure of the inferior court had been properly set forth in the protocol—the document being simultaneously compared with the duplicate copy handed to the *sudnie muzhi* at the time when, at the conclusion of the first trial before the *kormlentshik*, the protocol was submitted to the judge for his seal. If the *sudnie muzhi* could show that the inferior court had proceeded as was set forth in the protocol, and that the said protocol agreed *verbatim* with the official copy, then the party who had disputed the protocol was non-suited—or, in the contrary event, the responsibility for any irregularities discovered in the judge's procedure fell upon the judge himself. As for the *dobrie liudi* to whom I have referred, they were persons specially selected for each case, after the manner of modern jurymen. During the sixteenth century they became a permanent institution, though only in a few localities at first (more particularly in the Novgorodian North), and later universally. Also, the Second *Sudebnik* enacted that the court of a *kormlentshik* should include

certain chosen agrarian *starosti*, with a number of sworn assessors known as *tsielovalniki* (though these must not be confounded with the *sotskïe*, *starosti*, and *dessiatskïe* of older times—officials charged with the collection and apportionment of taxes, and, in general, with the management of all the industrial affairs of their units). By degrees, therefore, the powers of sworn *sudnïe muzhi* became augmented until they had come to take a leading share in the dispatch of judicial business. Upon them was imposed, among other things, the duty of "defending the truth" and "preserving all matters in righteousness, and according unto the kissing of the cross, and without cunning" in the courts of *kormlentshiki*. That is to say, they were charged with the function of watching over the regularity of legal procedure in the same, and with the safeguarding of the legal system and local juridical custom from the irresponsibility or inexperience of *kormlentshiki* who did not know, or did not care to know, the ins and outs of local judicial practice. In short, these *sudnïe muzhi* were the keepers of the public conscience. The *Sudebnik* of 1550 further empowered them to protect the equitable interests of litigants. This function is set forth in two enactments of the code. The first of those two enactments prescribed that at all hearings of suits before a *kormlentshik* there should be present *starosti* and *tsielovalniki* hailing from the *volosti* to which the plaintiff and the defendant belonged; while the second of those enactments ordained that, in the event of a *pristav* (tipstaff) of a *namiestnik* or a *volostel* arresting an accused or a defendant, he should not have the right—even though he were unable to find sureties for his prisoner—to gaol the latter without giving notice to the local *starosta* and *tsielovalniki*. If he so gaoled him without giving local notice, the *starosta* and *tsielovalniki* were empowered, on demand of the prisoner's relatives, to set the accused at liberty, and even to sue the *pristav*, on the accused's behalf, for any damage done to the latter by the illegal incarceration. By thus becoming permanent, sworn assessors in the courts of *namiestniki* and *volosteli*, local elective officials gradually came to fill the *rôle* of intermediaries between *kormlentshiki* and the local communities. Finally, both the one control and the other—namely, the control from above and the control from below—to which the acts of *kormlentshiki* were subject became combined into that universal system of lodging complaints against *kormlentshiki* which was conferred upon all local inhabitants by the

two *Sudebniki* and the local charters to which I have referred: the said inhabitants themselves having the right to fix the date when the accused *namiestnik* or *volostel* should attend, or should depute his representative to attend, the Tsar's tribunal—there to answer (whether in a *prikaz* or before the *Boyarskaia Duma*) the charge brought against him.

I repeat, therefore, that the distinguishing feature of the second stage in the reorganisation of Muscovite administration was the establishment of a dual control over the doings of provincial *kormlentshiki*. Yet the participation of local elective officials in the dispensation of justice was but an auxiliary corrective to the judicial activity of *kormlentshiki*, since in the first half of the sixteenth century there was begun the third stage of the process which we are studying—namely, the stage which consisted of entrusting local communities with the independent performance of a portion of the work which had been so unsatisfactorily carried out by *kormlentshiki*, especially of the work of safeguarding the public security. Indeed, this constituted the first step towards the total substitution of locally elected officials for *kormlentshiki*. Up to the time of Ivan IV. *kormlentshiki* alone (i.e. *namiestniki* and *volosteli*) had jurisdiction in criminal matters; at first without *doklad*, and subsequently on the basis of forwarding graver cases to the capital. Now, it should be noted that these same graver cases (namely, of brigandage, murder, theft, arson, and the like—all the crimes, indeed, which were known as "most villainous deeds") constituted, for *namiestniki* and *volosteli*, their most lucrative source of judicial income, since such crimes brought them in the largest *poshlini*, owing to the fact that persons involved in such charges were liable to "forfeiture," or confiscation of their property to the *kormlentshik*, less a certain assessed amount in indemnity to the prosecution; whereas all other infringements of the law brought in the *kormlentshik* merely amounts equal to the fine inflicted, or to one-half of it. Naturally, therefore, though the *kormlentshik's* personal interest led him to be very active in the prosecution of "most villainous deeds," and to inflict full penalties for them, he felt that he had no inducement, nor even the means, to take any steps towards the *prevention* of such crimes. For instance, when a murder was done, the *volostel*—or, more frequently, the *namiestnik*—to whom jurisdiction in such matters belonged would call upon the community on whose lands the offence had been committed

to surrender the criminal, and if the community failed to comply with the summons, the *kormlentshik* could mulct it to the tune of four roubles (which, at the close of the fifteenth, and the beginning of the sixteenth, centuries, must have been equal fully to 400 roubles of our own money). Consequently, although isolated "deeds of villainy" were prosecuted, there existed, as yet, no institution capable of engaging in a permanent, organised struggle with the doers of evil works—with recidivists, professional brigands, thieves, and so on. At all events *kormlentshiki* do not seem to have been the men for the work. Yet the terrible growth of brigandage to which memorials of the period make frequent reference was calling for some special administrative machinery to safeguard the security of the public and to prevent crime. As a first experiment, therefore, the Government flooded the provinces with constables specially appointed for the hunting down of "villainous persons," but inasmuch as these constables were dependent for their efficiency upon the co-operation of the local communities, they only became an added burden upon the latter, and entailed upon the local inhabitants great loss and delay. Next Moscow decided to delegate the management of the criminal police to local communities themselves. Consequently, during the minority of Ivan IV. (when the State was in the hands of the boyars), it began to endow urban and rural communities with what were known as *gubnia gramoti* or police-divisional charters—*i.e.* local commissions whereby communities were empowered to search out, and to prosecute on their own initiative, all "villainous men." In this fashion the old obligation whereby local communities were required to hand over murderers to the local *namiestnik* became replaced by a responsible right, on the part of those communities, to apprehend and punish such offenders themselves. Yet the system only attained organisation by degrees, and through many fluctuations. For instance, in some localities the Government entrusted the duty of "dealing with affairs of robbery" either to selected assessors of the *kormlentshik's* tribunal or to *sotskïe* and *starosti*, who executed their functions under the direction of the local *prikastchik*;[1] whereas in other parts of the country it appointed special officials for the purpose. A police-criminal district where the prosecution of "villainous persons" was entrusted to the local community was known as a *guba* or division; and originally this partition of the

[1] See p. 141.

country into *gubi* coincided with the petty local administrations. For instance, *gubnia gramoti* granted to Bielozersk and Kargopol in the year 1539 (the earliest deeds of the kind known to us) prescribe that all local inhabitants, irrespective of class, shall "bind themselves the one unto the other, for the taking and visiting of evil men," and shall for that purpose select, in each *volost*, some three or four "sons of boyars," with, as their assistants, certain *starosti*, *dessiatskïe* and *dobrïe liudi*, who shall be chosen at large from among the cesspaying population. Thus the work of these *gubi* established co-operation between the official and the cesspaying classes, with subordination of the latter to the former. At the same time it should be noted that the *sela* of the great privileged landowners constituted separate *gubi* to themselves—constituted units which acted independently of the *volosti*, and possessed *starosti* and *tsielovalniki* of their own. For instance, the year 1549 saw a batch of five *sela*, the property of the Monastery of St. Cyril of Bielozersk, formed into a separate *guba*, and placed under two *starosti* of its own (persons described as "heads chosen from among the State servitors of the region") and a certain number of *tsielovalniki* selected from among the peasantry of the *sela*. Nevertheless, in all the more important matters affecting their units these monasterial heads of *gubi* co-operated with the heads of the *volostnia gubi* and *stanovia gubi* in Bielozersk, and transacted business in joint session with them: which, by a natural process, led to unification of the smaller *guba* units, and so to the establishment of a pan-cantonal authority. During the second half of the sixteenth century this authority made its appearance in the shape of pan-cantonal *gubnïe starosti*, or *starosti* of *gubi*—one or two to each canton, while the canton itself became a whole, self-contained *guba*. Thus we find the *gubnïe starosti* of *volosti* and *stani* who were set up in Bielozersk by the above-mentioned charter of 1539 becoming subordinated, by a later charter of 1571, to two *pan-cantonal gubnïe starosti*. A similar consolidation of *guba* institutions took place also on the estates of large private landowners. Thus we find the multitudinous *sela* of the Troitski Monastery of St. Sergius—properties which lay scattered over no fewer than twenty-two cantons of the central provinces—comprising among their number several settlements which possessed monasterial *gubi* of their own, together with separate elected *prikastchiki* and *tsielovalniki*, separate *gubnia izbi* or local police-offices, and separate houses of detention for

thieves and malefactors—all of them maintained at the Monastery's expense. Finally, in 1586 all these monasterial *gubi* became united under the direction of a single *gubnoi starosta*, who was elected from among the Monastery's military retainers.

Having thus become pan-cantonal, *guba* administration formed a complex network of head and subordinate police units. At their head stood *gubnïe starosti* of cantons, who were elected (to the number of one or two per canton) at a general cantonal convention, though exclusively from among the official class. These functionaries performed their duties in company with *gubnïe tsielovalniki*—officials whom the cesspaying classes, urban and rural, elected in the old small *guba* divisions of *posadi*, *volosti*, *stani*, and *sela*. Finally to *gubnïe starosti* were subordinated certain functionaries known as *sotskïe*, *piatidessiatskïe*, and *dessiatskïe*—persons who were elected from each *sotnia*, *polusotnia*, and *dessiatok* (the petty police areas into which, according to the number of households which they included, the larger *gubi* were divided).

In these *guba* institutions we see the growth of a dawning realisation of State problems. They were the outcome of the idea that crime is not a private affair, but one that touches the community as a whole, and affects the common welfare, and that its prosecution is therefore a State obligation, and calls for special organs and methods of administration. The development of the same idea led to an extension of *guba* jurisdiction, until it had come to embrace the whole field of criminal offences. At first, however (according to the Second *Sudebnik* and the earlier *gubnia gramoti*), that jurisdiction covered only acts of theft—though, in time, there became added to it brigandage, and (in the seventeenth century) murder, arson, insults to parents, and so forth. Also, a special order of procedure was evolved for *guba* cases. Hitherto *kormlentshiki* had dealt with cases on the accusatory or contentious system, of which the true name was *sud* (trial). That is to say, a suit could be initiated on a private plea or accusation, and decided either by the confession of the accused, by the evidence of witnesses, by the *polé* or legal duel,[1] by *prisiaga* or "swearing,"[2] or by written documents. A *gubnoi starosta*, however, tried cases on the *inquisitorial* or *examinatory* system. That is to say, a suit or a trial could be initiated without a private plea or accusation, but either on

[1] See vol. i. p. 129.

[2] See vol. i. p. 360.

the apprehension of a criminal in the act, after the holding of a *povalni obuisk* (a public inquiry concerning the previous conduct and social reputation of an accused person), or on *ogovor* (the torture of an accused person until he had been forced to incriminate accomplices). All these sources of evidence had the force of legal proof in themselves, even though not subjected to comparative appraisement by the court. Indeed, any laying of private information concerning an act of crime (no matter whether it were unsupported by evidence of an incriminatory or direct nature) could lead to a *povalni obuisk*, and if further information concerning the accused person were forthcoming during the progress of that inquiry, and proof were still wanting, the accused could be subjected to the torture, and, if he still declined to confess to the alleged crime, he could forthwith be condemned, "by reason of" (*i.e.* on the strength of) "the *obuisk*," to imprisonment for life, while the informant in the case received a reward out of the proceeds of the prisoner's property. The aim of this *guba* legal process was strictly one of a police character—namely, the prevention and eradication of "villainy," the extirpation of "evil men." A *gubnaia gramota* charged the authorities of a *guba* "to seek out evil men, and to bid pursuers enter cause against the same without a judge, and to punish them as is befitting, in Our (the Tsar's) name." Consequently a *gubnoi starosta* concerned himself less with the re-establishment of the law, when infringed, than with the protection of the public security. Immediately on entering upon his post it was his duty to summon a convention of all classes in the cantonal community (of clergy, white and black, of the gentry, and of the urban and rural peasantry), and to question them on oath as to who within the *guba* had the reputation of being "villainous men." If, during this preliminary *obuisk*, any person was given a bad name as "a villainous man," he could straightway be arrested and brought before the *gubnoi starosta*, while his property was inventoried and impounded pending the issue of the trial.

Such were the first beginnings of that complicated, fussy *guba* procedure which was marked by so many arrests, incriminations through torture, "eye-piercings," "suits of pursuers," *povalnïe obuiski*, examinations, confiscations, and hangings. Throughout, this cumbersome organisation and its restless activity had a dual tendency. In the first place, it called upon all classes in the community to aid the elective

guba authorities in the task of apprehending and obtaining information against criminals: wherefore the system represented a sort of general mobilisation of the local communities for the maintenance of the public security, for the subserving of an interest that was common to all sections of the population; while, in the second place, the prosecution of "villainous men," though a task originally entrusted to urban and rural communities as a *concession* only, became, through the fact that *guba* activity developed into a general, pan-cantonal institution, the responsible *duty* of such communities. This character of *guba* activity as a permanent institution is seen, firstly, in the circumstance that election of *gubnïe starosti* by all classes in a cantonal community rendered that community the guarantor of its own nominees; and the same guarantee was required in the case of *starosti* who were appointed by the Government. That is to say, there was imposed upon the cantonal community responsibility for the good conduct of its elective officials, as well as a liability to make good any defalcations of which they might prove guilty. Secondly, the character of *guba* activity as a permanent institution is seen in the fact that, at the *predvaritchni obuisk* or initial convention of inquiry, the inhabitants of the given *guba* area furnished both the Government and themselves with guarantees that they would suffer no "villainous men" to dwell in their midst, but, if failing to do this, they would indemnify in penalties and costs, "twofold and apart from the court of a judge," any persons who should incur loss through the non-prevention of crime. Thus *guba* administration had for its basis the principle of responsibility of all men to the State, as expressed in the twofold, obligatory guarantee given by local communities—the guarantee on behalf of their elected *starosti*, and the guarantee on behalf of themselves and each of their members.

This was a new principle in the Muscovite order of State—an order which still rested upon appanage fusion of private with governmental right. Two questions now arise. In the first place, seeing that the preservation of public security was not a local obligation, but one which appertained to the State at large, why did the Muscovite State find it necessary to entrust the work to elected representatives of the local communities, instead of to direct organs of the central power? Secondly, the community, in the Muscovite Empire of the sixteenth century, was split up into a number of economic grades, which differed

in their avocations, in their nature, in their dimensions, and in their relative possession of capital. They were fluctuating, mobile grades, and individuals could pass from one to another, or change or combine their avocations within the same grade, since, as yet, the State had not begun to impress upon them a corporate stamp by assigning them services and obligations according to their economic distinctions. Yet amid all this social-political welter there were beginning to stand out three fundamental grades, under which the finely differentiated social classes grouped themselves according to their obligations. These three fundamental grades were (1) service landowners—*i.e.* persons bound to military service, (2) cesspaying urban dwellers—*i.e.* persons engaged in trade and industry, and liable for cess "according unto goods and merchandise," and (3) cesspaying rural dwellers—persons engaged in agriculture, and liable for cess according to the amount of their tillage. Of the clergy we need not speak, since from earliest times their sacred calling had set them apart from the rest of the community. Now, was the general corporate character of *guba* administration a sign that in the State and among the nation at large there had begun to make itself felt a need for supporting or strengthening the joint action of the inchoate corporate classes in the work of government? The answer to that question will be found in the origin and organisation of the local institutions created by Ivan IV.

At the time when *guba* administration was first introduced, no proposal seems yet to have been made for limiting the rights of *kormlentshiki*, still less for abolishing *kormlenia*. All that the legislature had attempted to do was to define the respective jurisdictions of *gubnïe starosti* and *kormlentshiki*, and to determine the mutual relations of the parties without giving offence to either. We find the *Sudebnik* of 1550 particularly solicitous to defend the powers of *kormlentshiki* from any interference by *gubnïe starosti*, since, whereas it entrusts the latter only with the disposal of cases of larceny, it orders that cases of *brigandage* shall be dealt with according to local *gubnia gramoti;* some of which assigned cases of larceny and brigandage to local *starosti*, while others of them prescribed that such cases should be dealt with by *starosti* in company with the local *kormlentshik*. Also, these *gubnia gramoti* made careful definition of the respective shares which the two authorities were to take in this adjudicatory work. Thus *kormlentshiki* were to recover their fees from the accused, while *gubnïe*

starosti were to indemnify the prosecution out of his property, to subject him to capital punishment or the *knut*, and so on. Yet the community seems to have regarded the innovation of *gubnia gramoti* as a measure aimed straight at *kormlentshiki*, and it is with an air of profound satisfaction that the Chronicle of Pskov refers (under date of 1541) to the new order of things. "The Tsar," it writes, "hath shown great favour unto his land, in that he hath begun to grant charters unto towns and *volosti* whereby the peasantry may seek out villainous men from among their midst, and judge them according unto the kissing of the cross, and visit them with death,"—and this without previous reference to a *namiestnik* or his *tiuni*, "in whom there doth abide great enmity against all Christian folk." The Pskovians themselves acquired such a charter (though it has not come down to us), and forthwith began to try and to punish (through their *tsielovalniki* and *sotskïe*) "all villainous persons." One local *namiestnik*, in particular, took great umbrage at the Pskovians, "in that their charter is as a mirror" (that is to say, "is as a beam in the eye of the *namiestnik*," as the chronicler probably meant to write). To this the narrator adds, "Yet among the *krestiané* there is now joy and freedom from evil men,"—and straightway proceeds to include among his list of "evil men" all *namiestniki* and their myrmidons!

A fourth and last stage in the reorganisation of Muscovite local government was an attempt finally to abolish *kormlenia* (1) by substitution of publicly elected officials for *namiestniki* and *volosteli*, and (2) by commitment of the criminal police, the local administration of justice, and the civil judiciary to the local communities themselves. Various motives led to this change. In the first place, the *kormlenïe* system entailed great evils both upon the military service (*i.e.* the defence) of the country and upon the management of local affairs. We have seen that the military-official class of the Muscovite Empire had a dual importance, as constituting at once the Empire's warlike force and the Empire's leading organ of administration. Also, we have seen that the majority of the members of that class looked to *kormlenia* as their chief means of support. Now, almost every year during the sixteenth century the State found itself forced to mobilise large bodies of troops for the defence of one or other of its frontiers; which mobilisation encountered a serious hindrance in the fact that most of the military commanders on the active list were scattered over the

country as *kormlentshiki*, while, in the same way, the system of local administration suffered from the circumstance that its organs were periodically forced to abandon their posts and go campaigning. Thus the two branches of the service interfered with one another. Military servitors became irregular governors, and, by so becoming, ceased to be regular military servitors. Similarly, the new requirements of the social order caused problems of administration to become more complex, and to demand of the Government's agents increased attention alike to the interests of the State and to the needs of the population—tasks for which *kormlentshiki* possessed neither the aptitude nor the inclination. This gave rise to numberless abuses on the part of *kormlentshiki*, and consequently to much grave discontent on the part of those whom they administered. Among the measures which the Muscovite Government was obliged to devise for curbing the inordinate rapacity of *kormlentshiki* the most important was an original system of official responsibility which the Government based upon the ancient right of any person administered to complain to the supreme power concerning any illegal acts committed by that power's agents. That is to say, on the termination of a *kormlentshik's* tenure of office, any local inhabitants who had suffered from acts of malfeasance of his (or of his subordinates) could, by ordinary civil process, enter suit concerning any conduct of the official concerned which they considered to have been irregular. In a suit of this kind the accused *kormlentshik* figured as an ordinary civil defendant who, on proof of the plaintiff's claim, was bound to compensate his late "constituents" for any wrong he had done them, as well as to pay certain judicial penalties and costs. Likewise, under the system of judicial procedure then in force the plaintiffs could challenge their late *kormlentshik* to a *polé* or legal duel. Nevertheless, though we find the Lithuanian chronicler Michaelon[1]—a man who thoroughly knew the Muscovite institutions of his time (the middle sixteenth century), and had little love for the local governors of his own country, with their irresponsible powers—going into raptures over this Muscovite means of restraining a provincial administration within the bounds of legal decorum, it was a decorum maintained through scandal. What spectacle, indeed, could be more prejudicial and disgraceful, from the point of view of social discipline, than to see a recently retired governor, or his

[1] See p. 113.

substitute (in most cases his household steward), engaged in a brawl with a hired duellist put forward, on their behalf, by persons whom he had lately been administering in the name of the supreme power? Moreover, this recognised method of defending administered persons from the irresponsibility of their administrators led to endless litigation, since the retirement of a *kormlentshik* who had failed to get on with his people invariably proved the signal for the initiation of countless complicated suits on the question of excessive exactions or other wrongs. For their part, the Muscovite *prikaznie sudi*, or heads of the central administrative departments in Moscow, had little sympathy with the doings of their provincial brethren. Thus, in a description of the position of affairs before the reform of local government, one official scribe is found remarking that *namiestniki* and *volosteli*, by their misconduct, often devastated whole towns and *volosti;* that, for those towns and *volosti*, such officials were not guardians and rulers, but persecutors and destroyers; that the "churls" of those towns and *volosti* "did contrive much cunning" against the *kormlentshiki*, and even, in some cases, murdered their subordinates; and that, as soon as ever a *kormlentshik* quitted his post, the "churls" referred to hastened to institute suits against him: all of which gave rise to so much "shedding of blood and defilement of souls" (the result, presumably, of legal duels and of giving evidence on oath) that many *namiestniki* and *volosteli*, on being worsted in such litigation, lost not only the spoils which they had gained in office, but also their old hereditary estates, through having to pay heavy judicial penalties and indemnities for the murdering of plaintiffs!

With the aim of putting an end to this disgraceful litigation, the Tsar, in 1550, summoned a pan-territorial convention, at which he charged his boyars—heads of *prikazi* and *kormlentshiki* alike—that "within a term appointed they do make peace with all Christian folk in the State." In other words, the Tsar proposed to his administrative officials that in future they should settle their administrative litigation with inhabitants of the provinces, not by the method hitherto customary (namely, that of the legal duel), but by some innocuous, conciliatory means. This proposal was so thoroughly adopted that in the following year the Tsar was able to inform the fathers of the *Stoglav* that his boyars—*prikaznie liudi* and *kormlentshiki*—had "made their peace with the provinces in all causes whatsoever." This

pacific liquidation of administrative suits served as a preparatory measure for the total abolition of *kormlenia*. Previous to that consummation, however, the stereotyped reforming methods of the Muscovite Government led it to make certain preliminary, tentative experiments. For example, in February, 1551 (just after the assembling of the Council of the *Stoglav*) we find the peasantry of the *volost* of Plesskaia, in the canton of Vladimir, being granted a charter whereby they were empowered, if they wished, no longer to render *kormi* and *poshlini* to the local *kormlentshik*, but to pay a tax (*obrok*) to the treasury direct. In return for this they were to be granted the right of "judging themselves and among themselves"—*i.e.* of having their suits decided by such *starosti* and *tsielovalniki* of their own "as they shall choose for themselves from all the *volost*." At first the peasants of Plesskaia were granted this exemption for a year only, but subsequently it was extended for a second year, on condition that they paid double tax. Similarly, in 1552—*i.e.* three months previous to the campaign against Kazan—the suburban residents and rural peasantry in a canton in the region of the White Sea were granted a charter whereby the administration of the local *namiestnik* was abolished, and the decision of all local suits handed over to popularly elected authorities. Next, no sooner was the conquest of Kazan effected than, with hands once more released for administrative reform, and with greatly heartened spirit, the Government applied itself to a renewed consideration of the question of *kormlenia*. Feeling in the *Boyarskaia Duma* (to which body the Tsar referred the matter) was unanimously in favour of doing away with such posts: wherefore in November, 1552, the Sovereign was able officially to announce that the Government had decided to reorganise provincial administration without the participation of *kormlentshiki*, and that a general plan of local self-government would forthwith be drawn up. Inasmuch as the campaign against Kazan had been followed by a generous bestowal of honours and rewards upon all the professional military men who had taken part in the affair, it was decided also to recognise the non-professional *zemstva* or local bodies, which had borne the financial burden of the expedition. Accordingly (to quote a contemporary chronicler) "the Tsar with *kormlenia* did recompense all the *zemstva*." This means that the Government made local self-administration a universal institution by

empowering provincial communities to apply, if they so wished it, for emancipation from their local *kormlentshik*. One by one, those communities began to transfer themselves to the new system; until, persuaded by its various preliminary experiments in reform, that the *zemstvo* was an administrative necessity, the Government decided to establish it generally by a legislative measure, and issued (in 1555) a law which, though it has not come down to us in any extended form, is yet to be found summarised by an annalist. The same measure is foreshadowed in a charter which was conferred in that year upon the *sloboda ribolovov*, or ward of fishermen, in the town of Periaslavl. In that document the Tsar states that he has issued commands that "in all towns and *volosti* there be appointed chosen *starosti* whom the *krestiané* shall select from all their territory," as men not only "prudent to judge them in equity and without process of pleading or delay," but also competent to collect and forward to the Imperial treasury the tax which he (the Tsar) has seen fit to establish in *lieu* of *kormi* to a *namiestnik*. From this the bases or conditions of the reforms effected are clear—namely, that powers of transference to self-government were accorded to all provincial communities as a *right*, though only as a voluntary one, not an obligatory. At the same time, the rendering of *kormi* to *namiestniki* and *volosteli* had been a *compulsory* due: wherefore communities which desired to replace their *kormlentshiki* with locally elected officials were to redeem that due, in the same manner that, in later days, the serfs, on emancipation, had to redeem the seigniorial lands which they then received. Accordingly all renderings hitherto payable to *kormlentshiki* were now commuted into a general State tax, directly payable to the treasury: and this commutation of dues became known as *otkup* or redemption, while charters of emancipation from *kormlentshiki* were given the name of *otkupnia gramoti* or redemptory charters Local State taxation, therefore, was at once bound up with and introduced contemporarily with a general reorganisation of the obligatory State service of the official class. It was then that there became established the normal ratio both of that taxation and of rewards for its rendition (such rewards, as we have seen, taking the form of *pomiestïe* and monetary "lots"), and it was then, also, that the *pomiestïe* land tenure which underwent such great development after the abolition of *kormlenia* became the principal means of supporting the official class,

while the new source of income created by the redemptory tax provided the means of *mobilising* that class, since out of the redemptory tax all military and State servitors now received permanent monetary salaries "according unto *otechestvo* and value"—*i.e.* according to the birth and fitness for service of the individual.

Though such local administrative reforms constituted a sharp political break, they acquired practical simplification from the Second *Sudebnik*, which established compulsory and universal session of local *starosti* and *tsielovalniki* in the courts of *kormlentshiki*. It only then remained to remove the *kormlentshiki* themselves from those courts, to transfer their functions to the new locally elected assessors, and to convert them (the *kormlentshiki*) into an independent legal college. Herein lay the essence of Ivan's reforms—that they called for no new organs of administration, nor yet for any new division of the country into judicial areas, since the new locally elected officials took up their work in the same territorial units as had pertained to the *namiestniki* and *volosteli*—namely, the units known as *posadi*, *stani*, *volosti*, and *slobodi*. It is only in the north that we meet with large local divisions of the kind which comprised more than one *volost*, or even a whole canton (as in Viazma and Kholmogori on the Northern Dwina). Each judicial area elected one, two, or more *starosti*, and a contingent of *tsielovalniki*, whose jurisdiction varied according to local conditions. In the main, however, that jurisdiction covered all cases of pure process—*i.e.* all civil cases and prosecutions for cases of crime (acts of assault and theft are examples) which called for settlement on the contentious system rather than through the *guba* or police-prosecutory method. In some localities *guba* cases (*i.e.* cases of arson, murder, brigandage, burglary, and the like) were dealt with by local *starosti* in conjunction with *gubnïe starosti*, while in the area of the Northern Dwina, where the scarcity of the official class did not permit *gubnïe starosti* to be elected, *guba* cases were entrusted to local *starosti* alone. The duties of local *starosti* also included the collection of the redemptory tax which was exacted for grants of self-administration, and, in a few cases, the collection of certain other assessed dues, and the forwarding of the same to the treasury. Finally, local elective *starosti*, with their *tsielovalniki*, performed their judicial and taxatory functions both on their own personal responsibility and under a guarantee by their communities; while failure to perform judicial-

administrative duties with rectitude and ability was punished with death and confiscation of property—the latter going to compensate any persons who had suffered from the malfeasance of the accused, and to reward any informant who had "made report touching the matter." Also, it seems to have been taken for granted that, inasmuch as the local community elected its own *starosta* and *tsielovalniki*, the local community must be responsible for any defalcations on the part of an official who, on conviction for malfeasance, was found to be insolvent. Such was the strict responsibility under which local elective justices dealt with the business entrusted to their care. They did so, not only "without process or delay," but also without partiality, since charters of local self-administration merely promised, in the Tsar's name, that, so long as the justices of a given locality performed their duties aright, and collected and forwarded the redemptory tax of their unit punctually and in full, "both Ourselves and the land will show unto them favour, and the Tsar will command that neither *poshlini* nor other dues be taken from their territory, and he will reward them yet more."

I have now described the most important of the changes in the organisation of local Muscovite administration during the period under study. Their tendency was, throughout, so definite and identical that the determination of the rights of *kormlentshiki*, the system of *doklad*, the introduction of local assessors into the courts of *kormlentshiki*, and the replacement of the latter with elective *starosti* (in the first instance with *gubnïe starosti*, and, at a later period, with local *starosti*) appear to be so many consecutive stages in one and the same process —namely, the process of the growth of local self-administration. Yet were these stages solely the outcome of the development of local independence in public affairs? The nature of the system of local self-government introduced by Ivan IV. is best seen in the part which he imposed upon the local communities as regards the *financial* administration of the country. Under Ivan's system, the local *starosti* collected all the *direct* taxes, while the collection of the *indirect* or *excise* taxes, as well as the exploitation of such revenue-producing governmental assets as liquor- and salt-making, fisheries, and so forth, was entrusted to individuals on what was known as the "*na vieru*" or "trust" system. That is to say, each local cesspaying community elected, or appointed on nomination by the Government, certain

persons known as *viernïe liudi* or "trusted men," and these, again, (with a contingent of *tsielovalniki*) were charged with the collection of the revenues named above: the proper execution of their functions being secured both upon the personal property of the collectors themselves and upon guarantees furnished by the local communities which appointed them. At the more important trading centres these guarantees were exacted, not only from some of the local merchants, but also from one or more leading members of the *metropolitan* mercantile community. Thus, in 1551 the collection of excise duties in the town of Bielozersk was entrusted, "*na vieru*" and for the space of one year, to two merchants of Moscow and twenty merchants of Bielozersk. If, within the time named, the head of these appointed *viernïe liudi* and *tsielovalniki* should fail to furnish the sum estimated to be recoverable from the local community, he was to make good the deficit twice over out of his own pocket; while, if he was found to be insolvent, the local electors were to make good the deficit on his behalf. In time this system of "*na vieru*" administration developed into a network of institutions in which the local communities became woefully entangled, and which, every year, caused great numbers of persons to be taken from their private pursuits for the performance (on election, or according to rota, or on appointment by the Government) of onerous fiscal functions which proved their ruin.

We can now see clearly the character of the reforms introduced by Ivan IV. Although, as a rule, local self-administration is directly opposed to centralisation, the two systems may become placed in such a correlation to one another as to express the essence of each. Local self-administration, in the true sense of the word, connotes a more or less independent management of local affairs by representatives of each local community, as well as a right of rating the population, of disposing of public property and local revenues, and so forth. Even as no real centralisation can exist where local organs of the central power (appointed by the latter) act on independent and irresponsible lines, so there can be no real self-administration where local elective authorities transact, not local, but general State, affairs at the behest, and under the supervision, of the central Government. In the former case it is *de*centralisation which we have to deal with (as in the Muscovite administration by *namiestniki* and *volosteli*), and, in the latter, a situation wherein local self-administration figures merely as the instru-

ment of centralisation. The important point is not so much whether local authorities are elected or appointed, but what may be the nature of the functions which they are called upon to perform and the degree to which they are dependent upon the central power. In surveying the functions performed by the old *gubnïe* and local *starosti* (namely, the collection of State taxes, the dispensation of justice, and the fulfilment of police duties), we see that these were not so much local matters, in the true sense of the term, as matters of State which formerly had been dealt with by the local organs of the central Government—namely, by the *namiestniki* and *volosteli*. Consequently the essence of the local self-administration of the sixteenth century did not so much lie in the right of the local communities to manage their own affairs as in their obligation to undertake *general-departmental* tasks of government—to elect responsible workers "for the labours of the State." This was the new local duty, the particular species of State service, which was now imposed upon the cesspaying population. Naturally, with such service there went strict supervision of, and strict responsibility on the part of, local administrative officials towards the central Government. That is to say, the chief spring of the local institutions of the sixteenth century was the principle of communal responsibility, the joint guarantee, strictly and consecutively applied: wherefore as the fundamental motive for the working of those institutions we must name the need of establishing such a *State* responsibility of local administrative officials as had never been imposed upon the old *kormlentshiki*, whose responsibility towards the local communities over which they exercised jurisdiction had never been aught but a *civil* obligation. This combination of centralisation with local self-administration was the inevitable outcome of political exigency. The successful consolidation of Great Rus had placed the unifiers of the State in a great difficulty, inasmuch as the now united country needed not only to be defended, but also to be organised—and for such organisation neither the ready means nor the suitable instruments were to hand. In other words, the final consolidators of Moscow were overtaken by their own achievements—they found themselves unprepared to sustain the consequences of their own action: wherefore they had no choice but to resign the tasks which that action imposed upon them. Thereupon the Muscovite Government resorted to its customary method of attaining political organisation. That is to say, it proceeded to demand the

materials for that organisation from the people itself. New disbursements had to be made, so the Government imposed a new tax; new responsible and honorary organs of local administration were called for, so the Government imposed the duty of their selection upon the local communities. Finally, in order to secure the more complete responsibility of these judicial-administrative recruits, the latter were made *elective* (since, in those days, to elect meant to go bail for him elected). Thus sixteenth-century local self-administration owed its origin to the unworthiness or the unsuitableness of the older local administrative institutions—faults which first revealed themselves in the face of the new problems and requirements which rose to confront the State, until eventually the central Government had created, for their decision, the *zemstvo* or local administrative body, with its joint guarantee.

We have now answered the first of the two questions which we propounded to ourselves—namely, the question as to the Muscovite local organs of administration, with their non-local departments. Upon the second of those questions—namely, the question as to the corporate character of Muscovite local institutions—we will touch in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XVI

The Muscovite administration and the Muscovite community—The petty corporate character of Muscovite local government—The failure of the general corporate principle—The necessity of combining local institutions—*Zemskïe Sobori*—A story concerning the *Zemski Sobor* of 1550—Examination of the story—Composition of the *Zemskïe Sobori* of 1566 and 1598—Service and commercial-industrial members of those Councils—*Zemskïe Sobori* and the country—The status of a representative member at such gatherings—The system of debate in a *Zemski Sobor*—The significance of the "kissing of the cross" before such an assembly—Connection between *Zemskïe Sobori* and the local communities—Origin and significance of *Sobori*—The idea of a pan-territorial council—The Muscovite Empire at the close of the sixteenth century.

HAVING now studied *guba*, local, and "*na vieru*" administration, let us try to picture to ourselves the manner in which the community fitted itself into the framework of its new institutions.

We have seen that those institutions were of a dual character—that they were local as regards the source whence the organs of provincial self-government, the elective officials, derived their powers, and non-local as regards the nature of the business which those representatives of local communities were called upon to perform (such business being of a State or central-departmental, rather than of a local or provincial, character). As local institutions as regards the origin of their *personnel*, they tended more and more to disintegrate provincial government, both in the territorial relation and in the jurisdictional. In the Muscovite Empire the canton was never completely an integral administrative unit, since the rule of the rural *volosteli* never had more than the slenderest of connections with that of the urban *namiestnik*, and the authority of the latter frequently did not cover a whole canton, except in important criminal cases. Consequently, as soon as ever the local communities, urban and rural, acquired elective *starosti* and elective *viernïe liudi* of their own, they became distinct from one another, and split up into a number of petty local units formed of *posadi*, *volosti*, *stani*, *slobodi*, and detached groups of *sela* and *derevni*. None of these

units had any common authority to unite them in the canton, and only two administrative organisations—namely, *guba* organisation and the associations of the nobility (headed respectively by *gubnïe starosti* and town *prikastchiki*)—became combined into large groups which had points of concentration in the cantonal towns. The latter, however, was not the universal rule. For instance, in the canton of Riazan the members of the official class formed four separate sections, according to *stani*, while in the canton of Novgorod ten *guba* districts (each of them half a *piatina*[1]) had *gubnïe starosti* of their own. With this territorial disintegration of provincial administration there went a multiplication of jurisdictions. Four jurisdictions worked side by side in provincial administration—namely, (1) *guba* jurisdiction, (2) ecclesiastical jurisdiction (this comprised also laymen in service in Church institutions or occupying ecclesiastical lands), (3) jurisdiction of the service nobility, and (4) agrarian jurisdiction in the strict sense of the term (this included all cesspaying persons, urban or rural, who lived on fiscal or court lands or on private lands other than ecclesiastical). Again, agrarian jurisdiction included three separate jurisdictions—namely, judicial, industrial, and "*na vieru*." Yet the industrial affairs of the cesspaying communities, urban and rural (*i.e.* affairs relating to the apportionment and collection of fiscal dues, the performance of State obligations, the distribution of communal lands, and so forth), continued to be dealt with by local *starosti*, *sotskïe*, and *dessiatskïe* alone, since, even under the new judicial institutions of Ivan IV. (as seen from the *Sudebnik* of 1550), such officials were strictly distinguished from those *starosti* and *tsielovalniki* "who do sit in judgement with *namiestniki* and *volosteli*, and with the *tiuni* of the same."

All these jurisdictions (with the exception of *guba* jurisdiction) were institutions corporate in their class character. For instance, though agrarian *starosti* and *tsielovalniki* had jurisdiction over agricultural cesspayers and agricultural lands generally, ecclesiastical and service landowners were dependent upon those officials (or, to speak more correctly, were associated with them) only in respect either of such of their (the ecclesiastical and service landowners') estates as were in the occupation of cesspayers or of such homesteads as they owned on cesspaying urban lands which had not been freed by exemptory charters from

[1] See vol. i. p. 321.

the general liability to cess. Consequently this was only an *agrarian*, not a *personal or corporate*, dependency. At the same time, legislation of the times of Ivan IV. for organising local government showed a tendency to strengthen *guba* institutions by the establishment of a certain cohesion between the several jurisdictions: the object of which was to encourage joint public activity on the part of all the social classes. Thus the Council of the *Stoglav* passed a decree that, at the trials of civil and certain criminal cases in the courts of ecclesiastical boyars, there should always be present, not only ecclesiastical *starosti* or ordinaries, but also a number of agrarian *starosti* and *tsielovalniki*, with an agrarian *diak* or clerk. Similarly, in 1556 all classes in the canton of Novgorod —clergy, State servitors, and peasantry—were ordered to elect from each *piatina*, for taxatory purposes, a member of the official class, three or four leading members of the other classes, and one delegate per rural *pogost*[1]—persons who, under pain of confiscation of their property, were to undertake the collection of fiscal dues of every kind. Although this organisation of fiscal tax-collection largely resembled the organisation of *guba* police, the general tendency of State activity was unfavourable to the establishment of the pan-corporate principle in local government, since apportionment of State obligations went by *social classes*, and close-locked the mobile, mutable civil grades into compact State unions designed to meet the needs and interests of the State rather than those of the local communities. In land the State sought not only the material means for action, but also an agency for providing responsible organs for the local administration of the country. The actual *appointment* of those organs fell upon the local communities, and constituted a special duty for which special elective machinery had to be devised. Yet the several classes were too much differentiated by their interests and obligations to form a homogeneous provincial body capable of easily acting in harmonious co-operation. As a rule, administration is organised more or less to correspond both with the composition of a community and with that community's relation to the State. On the other hand, in the Muscovite Empire the community was split up into a number of corporate groups, according to the nature of the burdens imposed upon them by the State: wherefore, becoming an organ of centralisation, local self-government also became broken up into a number of corporate

[1] See p. 198.

jurisdictions. This disintegration of administration was what constituted the principal fault in the local institutions of the sixteenth century, and a fault which set up a thoroughly unsatisfactory relation between the local and the central administrations, since, though in no way *locally* united, the corporate communities of the provinces had no general rallying point in the administrative centre, in the capital. The local elective authorities (the *gubnie starosti*, town *prikastchiki*, elective *sudi*,[1] agrarian *starosti*, and *viernie liudi* of whom I have spoken) maintained independent relations with the *prikazi* of the metropolis according to the nature of their several functions, and with different *prikazi* at that—again according to the nature of the business transacted and the territorial distribution of the spheres of action of the several departments of the centre. Nevertheless this lack of unity was to a certain extent remedied by a political organ which arose in close connection with the local institutions of the sixteenth century, to bring the central Government into touch with the representatives of the local communities. In our literature this organ is usually known by the name of the *Zemski Sobor* or Territorial Council,[2] while certain memorials of the seventeenth century also term it the *Soviet Vsia Zemli* or "Council of All the Land." Up to the close of the sixteenth century this body met four times—namely, in 1550, in 1566, in 1584, and in 1598. Before we can rightly understand the character and significance of these gatherings we must study the circumstances under which they were convoked, and the nature of their composition.

The first *Zemski Sobor* was called together by Ivan IV. at a time when he was in a state of extreme mental disturbance. His coronation to the office of Tsar, with the adoption of the title; his marriage; the terrible burnings of Moscow; the popular uprising; the attacks upon Moscow by the Tartars of Kazan and the Crimea,—all these excitements had tended, from the beginning of the year 1547 onwards, to alternately raise and depress his unstable spirits. For a long while after the firings of the city he could not rid himself of the impression which those events produced upon him; so that as long as three years later we find him describing them to the Council of the *Stoglav* with all the vividness of a moment just experienced. "Then did fear enter into my soul, and a trembling into all my bones, so that

[1] Justices.

[2] Or Provincial Council.

my spirit did become abased, and I did perceive and feel contrite for my sins." Then, too, he decided, once and for all, to have done both with boyar misrule and with his thoughtless youth, and, applying himself diligently to matters of State, to seek out from among his *entourage* men and means to help him to right the position of affairs. In this mood it was that, in 1550, he convened the first *Zemski Sobor*. Of that assembly neither the proceedings nor any protocols have come down to us, and we know nothing of its composition, nor of the details of its activity: yet the following story concerning it has survived. When twenty years of age, Ivan, perceiving that the State was in sore plight and tribulation from the violence of the strong, decided to reconcile all men together in love. Consequently, after taking counsel with the Metropolitan how best to annihilate treason and allay dissension, the Tsar "did command that all his State be gathered together from towns of every rank." Next, he, on Easter morning, sallied forth, "with crosses," to the Red Square of Moscow; where, a *Te Deum* having been sung at the *lobnöe miesto* or place of execution, he addressed the Metropolitan thus: "I pray thee, holy father and master, to be unto me a helper and a defender of loving-kindness, for I know that thou dost wish well unto good works and love. Thou thyself knowest that I did lose my father when I was but four years of age, and my mother when I was but eight." Then, having portrayed in vivid language the evils of boyar misrule during his minority, Ivan turned and launched at the boyars assembled in the Square the following trenchant speech: "O unrighteous extortioners and robbers who do execute evil judgement unto yourselves, what answer shall ye make unto us—ye who have raised against you so much lamentation? Yet of that bloodshed am I clean. Do *ye* await your recompense." Next, he made the sign of the cross on every side, and went on: "O men of God, and men given unto us of God, I pray you that ye will give unto God your trust and unto yourselves your love, seeing that this day we are not fully able to set in order the wrongs and despoilings and renderings of taxes wherewith ye have suffered from the boyars. For this cause I do beseech you that ye will cease from enmity, the one against the other, and from all your strivings at law. I, even I, will be unto you a judge and a defender. Yea, I will root out iniquity, and recover of the robbers the spoil."

Ths story, however, gives rise to certain doubts in one's mind. In the first place, how are we to understand the passage "did command that all his State be gathered together from towns of every rank"? It contains hints rather than words. Yet, by following up those hints, we may, perhaps, interpret the many-faceted passage thus: The Tsar commanded that every province in his Empire should send to the capital representatives of every class. Yet it still remains doubtful whether those representatives were *elective*, whether they were of different ranks, and whether they represented given callings or classes. Also, it is difficult to understand why the speech from the throne with which the Tsar opened the Council should have been delivered, not in the great hall of the Kremlin palace, but in the Red Square of the city. Was the ceremony a first public sitting of the Council, amid all the setting of an old-time Russian popular meeting (with procession of the cross, *Te Deum*, and the rest of it), or were the proceedings of the Council limited to the Tsar's speech in question? The story says nothing more about the Council, except that it quotes a second speech which the Tsar addressed that day to Alexis Adashev when empowering him to scrutinise petitions from persons poor and oppressed. The truth probably is that this was the occasion when the *Tchelobitni Prikaz*, or Office for the Reception of Petitions to the Throne, was instituted, and when Adashev was appointed to be the first head of the new department. Another strange impression caused in one's mind by the Tsar's first speech is that it contains so much "temperament," yet so little consecutiveness. Indeed, at first sight one might suppose it to have been an invitation addressed by the Tsar to his people that all classes of the population should forthwith become reconciled together, and join in friendly action for the common weal. The Tsar would appear to have assumed the reins of government, and to be standing up before his people, and calling upon the supreme pastor of the Church and the land in general (as embodied in its representatives) to help him in the task of establishing State order and justice. The Supreme power figures as attempting a frank and open explanation with the nation—as endeavouring to point out to it the direction in which it should work for a reconciliation of the inimical tendencies of its many diverse elements. Yet to this invocation to the Metropolitan to be "a defender of loving-kindness" we find appended a

sharp, rancorous indictment of the boyars, in the shape of an accusation of tyranny and extortion! That is to say, we see the Tsar represented as opening an assembly convoked for a general peace-making with what practically amounts to an invitation to civil war! Consequently it is a question whether this speech represents an historical fact or only an oratorical *tour de force* of the kind which the olden historians loved to put into the mouths of their Themistocles's and Catos. The important point is that, at some period or another during the early part of Ivan's reign, when Makarius was Metropolitan, that prelate assisted in, or presided over, the compiling and completing of a great *recueil* of Russian history which afterwards became known as the *Stepennaia Kniga* or "Book of Degrees"—the name being due to the fact that the narrative is disposed according to the reigns of the various Suzerain Princes, and those reigns, again, according to "degrees" (*i.e.* generations), in proper genealogical order. Now, in a copy of the work compiled in Makarius' time, we find no mention of this speech of Ivan's to the Council, nor yet of any Council of 1550 at all; whereas in a later copy, made in the seventeenth century, both the one and the other of these items appear—though, as Professor Platonov has pointed out, only on a separate leaf, glued into the main text of the manuscript, and written in a different hand. However, whatever the origin of the above story, it is difficult to suspect the event itself. In the following year (1551) there was convened (for the purpose of organising ecclesiastical administration and religious life in general) the great Church Council usually known as the Council of the *Stoglav* (the name being due to the number of sections into which the written records of its findings were divided [1]), and to this assembly was read, among other things, an autograph "writing," or rescript, of Ivan's which represents what we should call a speech from the throne. Now, between this voluminous rescript (which was composed in the true spirit of Byzantine-Muscovite floridity) and the speech in the Red Square we can discern a close internal connection. In both of them we can hear the discordant notes of contrition, supplication, and anger—of peace, conciliation, and hostility. In the address to the Church Council the Tsar says that, on some occasion during the previous year, he and his boyars have confessed their sins to the fathers of

[1] *Sto*, in Russian=a hundred, and *glava* (gen. plur. *glav*) a chapter.

the present assembly, and have been blessed by those fathers, and pardoned for all their misdeeds. It can only be to the Council of 1550[1] (at which some of the Russian Hierarchy would, in the natural course, be present) that Ivan was referring. This shows us that the first *Zemski Sobor* of Moscow was a phenomenon altogether unprecedented in European history—that it was an assembly before which a Sovereign and his administrators made public repentance of their political errors. In any case such a reconciliation of Tsar and people, under the influence of agitation caused by internal and external alarms, would seem to mark an important moral stage, and one that furnishes some explanation of the purport and significance of the first *Zemski Sobor*. Further words addressed by Ivan to the Council of the *Stoglav* make it additionally clear that, in 1550, not a few purely practical matters of other kinds had been mooted—that various important legislative questions had been debated and decided in the *Sobor*. For instance, the Tsar now reported to the reverend fathers of the *Stoglav* that his charge to his boyars "to make their peace within a term with all Christians in his State" had been duly fulfilled. We have seen that this charge was an injunction to *kormlentshiki* to put a speedy and pacificatory ending to any lawsuits connected with their *kormlenia* which they might still have outstanding with local communities, and the same significance may be read into Ivan's prayer to the people assembled in the Red Square that they should "cease from enmity, the one against the other, and from all their strivings at law." Likewise the Tsar now submitted for the approval of the Council of the *Stoglav* a new *Sudebnik*—or, rather, an enlarged and re-edited version of his grandfather's *Sudebnik* of 1497,[2] for the revision of which he had received, at the *Zemski Sobor* of the previous year, the formal blessing of the Hierarchy. At the same time he added that he had arranged for *starosti*, *tsielovalniki*, *sotskie*, and *piatidessiatskie* to be appointed in all the provinces of the Empire, and also that he had "written charters of establishment of the same": wherefore he now prayed the fathers of the Council to examine the latter, and, after passing them in review, to append to the revised *Sudebnik*, as well as to a certain "Charter of Statutes," their signatures, "to the end that *it* may abide in the treasury." From this

[1] *i.e.* to the *Zemski Sobor* of that year.

[2] Ivan III.'s, or the First, *Sudebnik*.

it follows that the *Zemski Sobor* of 1550 had a more or less direct connection both with the series of legislative measures which we have studied and with a complete plan of reconstruction of the local administrations. We have seen that that plan began with a time-limit for liquidation of outstanding suits between local communities and *kormlentshiki*, that it went on with a revision of the *Sudebnik*, as also with obligatory and universal introduction of elective *starosti* and *tsielovalniki* into the courts of *kormlentshiki*, and that it concluded with edicts finally abolishing *kormlenia*. Also, we have seen that the first of those edicts was issued in February 1551, when the Tsar reported on the subject to the Council of the *Stoglav*. Finally, Ivan's words, "that *it* may abide in the treasury," can only give us to conclude that, along with *local* charters, there had been worked out some *general* or *normal* charter which, after being submitted to the fathers of the *Stoglav* for their scrutiny, together with the revised *Sudebnik*, was henceforth to be preserved in the State archives as a model. Evidently this model charter contained certain fundamental enactments to which additions could be made in conformity with local conditions. Of this we have evidence in local charters which charge new elective officials "to judge and to execute justice according unto the *Sudebnik* and *unto the Charter*, which doth contain ordinances for judgement *throughout all the land*." In short, it may be presumed that the chief subject of the deliberations of the first *Zemski Sobor* was a series of questions concerning the improvement of the general and judicial administration of the provinces.

Thus the connection between that particular Council and the reorganisation of local government becomes clear. Yet still it remains for us to determine the relation of the *Zemski Sobor* (regarded as an institution) to the local communities. Only then will it become possible for us to explain the manner in which the idea of elective representation arose in Muscovite minds. For that purpose let us examine the composition of the *Zemskie Sobori* of 1566 and 1598. The former was convened during the war with Poland over the question of Livonia, at a juncture when the Russian Government desired to ascertain the Council's opinion as to the advisability of making peace on certain terms proposed by the Polish king; while the latter *Sobor* was convoked for the purpose of electing a new Tsar, at a time when the hitherto reigning dynasty of Ivan Kalita had become broken off. Of both these Councils

the minutes or protocols have been preserved—namely, a *Prigovorni Spissok*, or Register of Decrees, of 1566, and an *Utverzhennaia Gramota*, or Charter of Authorisation, of 1598 (the latter being the document which recorded the election of Boris Godunov to the throne). Into each protocol there is inserted a list of names of the members of the Council—in the former case, of names to the number of 374, and, in the latter case, to that of 512. At the head of the two Councils stood the two supreme administrative bodies, ecclesiastical and lay (namely, the Holy Synod and the *Boyarskaia Duma*), with, in addition, the heads of *prikazi* of the capital, a certain proportion of their clerks, and those local organs of the central administration which were represented by the *voievodi* of garrison towns. Yet these were *government* officials, not persons representative of the community or of the country. In fact, the only class which was present in any strength at those gatherings was the service class; of which the percentage summoned to the Council of 1566 was (exclusive of functionaries belonging to purely administrative institutions) about 55 per cent. of the whole, and, in the case of the Council of 1598, about 52. The representation of the class referred to was a dual one, owing to the dual source of its powers. That is to say, it was a representation official and elective. This duality is explainable by the organisation of the gentry of that period. As already seen, the gentry class included in its composition two distinct, separate *strata*—namely, a *stratum* composed of the superior ranks of the military-administrative servitors of the State, and forming the Muscovite (or metropolitan) body of nobles, and a *stratum* composed of the lesser, or provincial-urban, nobility. Although the former of these *strata* constituted a separate corporation in whose hands lay all the military and administrative offices under the central Government, the circumstance that it was recruited (according to the retirement of its members from service) from the ranks of the provincial-urban nobility caused it, during the sixteenth century, never wholly to lose connection with the *dvoriantsvo* of the provinces. On military campaigns such metropolitan nobles were appointed *golovi*, or commanders, of the cantonal *sotni* or detachments formed of all the servitors[1] in a given canton: the nobles so chosen usually being those who owned *pomiestia* or *otchini* in the

[1] This term is used (as always) in the sense of members of the military-official class.

cantons from which their detachments were derived. These commanders might be termed *military* presidents of cantonal gentry, just as to town *prikastchiki* we have given the name of presidents of cantonal gentry in the *administrative* sense.[1] At the *Zemski Sobor* of 1566 cantonal associations of gentry were represented only by their *golovi-zemliaki—i.e.* the commissary nobles who served to maintain the connection of those associations with the capital: and these *golovi-zemliaki*, after commanding the troops against Poland, came straight to Moscow from the theatre of the war which had given rise to the convocation of the Council. Indeed, some of them pointed to that fact when declaring their opinions in the Council,—remarking that they did not wish to die shut up in Polotsk. "Howsobeit," they added, "we are the Tsar's slaves, and are ready this day to set ourselves upon our horses, and to yield our lives for the State." They were summoned to the *Sobor* because, of all men, they best knew the position of affairs—best knew the ins and outs of the question which was then occupying the Council. Yet this does not necessarily mean that they were *elected* by their cantonal detachments, as the representatives of the latter on the Council. Rather it is probable that, when the campaign opened, the *voievoda*, or local general in command, posted these officers to headships of cantonal detachments in virtue of their standing as the leading landowners in their cantons, and that, as cantonal commanders of detachments, they were summoned or sent to the *Sobor* as representatives also of their local associations of gentry.

Thus appointment to posts in virtue of service fitness, added to a summons or a mandate to attend a *Zemski Sobor* in virtue of a post, —such was the structure of parliamentary representation in the sixteenth century, however far it may be removed from our own political customs and ideas. In it we see the key to the character and importance of the *Zemski Sobor* of those days. Even an elective council of that species was a step forward in the direction of our own conceptions of representation; since, though it included a large proportion of metropolitan nobles who sat for cantonal associations of nobility in virtue of their position as holders of official posts, there sat with them a small body of military-official nobles (some 40 out of a total of 267) who may be assumed to have been *elective* deputies of their associations. This constituted a new element in the composi-

[1] See p. 141.

tion of a *Zemski Sobor*, and an element which was introduced for the first time in 1598. Nevertheless it was an element so insignificant as almost to seem a local accident or exception rather than an element which in any way infringed the fundamental representative principle of those assemblies.

Representation of the urban commercial and industrial classes on these *Zemskie Sobori* of 1566 and 1598 was based upon the same principles as was representation of the service landowners, except that, in the former case, those principles found clearer expression. To the Council of 1566 there were summoned only merchants of the capital of the higher grades, to the number of 75 persons, and in all probability even those few were not *elective* representatives, whether of their respective grades or of corporate bodies of any sort. Rather it is likely that they were leading metropolitan merchants who chanced to be available at the moment when the summonses were issued. Yet behind that insignificant mercantile element there stood the whole of the trading-industrial community, even as behind the nobility of the capital there stood all the cantonal associations of nobles. Like the metropolitan nobility, the *élite* of the Muscovite mercantile class was composed of men who had risen superior to the general mass of metropolitan merchants and provincial followers of trade; and, like the metropolitan nobility, again, these leading merchants performed services for the State—though in a different sphere of administration altogether. We have seen "*na vieru*" service to have been such a service, as comprising a system of financial functions which, in default of suitable agents at the centre, the treasury imposed upon the provincial mercantile classes. In this fiscal service the leading merchants of the capital held the same directive status as, in the sphere of military service, was held by the metropolitan nobility—namely, the status of being entrusted with the most important, influential, and responsible fiscal functions which needed to be performed. Also, it was a service which helped to maintain a certain connection between the metropolitan mercantile community and the local urban communities of merchants from which the former received its recruits. A capitalist of Yaroslavl or Kolomna might rise to be a *gost*, or visiting merchant, of Moscow, and to hold the position of a commercial counsellor there: yet he would continue to reside, and to carry on his business, in his own town, since it was there that the Government imposed upon him the conduct of the more important of its (the Government's) fiscal opera-

tions. The reason of this was that, through the medium of his own affairs, such a local capitalist would be well acquainted with the industrial conditions of the neighbourhood in which he carried on his business. Thus many a magnate of local markets rose to be a responsible agent of the central financial department of the State, and to figure in his provincial town as the director of such extensive fiscal enterprises of the State's as the collection of customs, excise, and other dues, the assessment of the local population for purposes of taxation, the purchase of local merchandise on behalf of the Tsar, and, in general, the direction of every species of commercial and industrial undertaking for the treasury. Such officials constituted at once the financial staff of the Muscovite Government and the leaders of their local worlds of trade and industry. Yet, despite the fact that this was the fiscal-official status of the metropolitan mercantile community, as expressed in the records of the Council of 1566, the resolution passed by the representatives of that community at the Council of 1598 defines the fundamental principle of representation on a *Zemski Sobor* somewhat differently. Up to the year 1598 the metropolitan *kupechestvo*, or merchant class, was (like the nobility) in process of acquiring a finished corporate organisation, until eventually it became divided into a number of grades ranking according to their possession of capital and their capacity for service under the treasury. Of these grades the highest consisted of *gosti*, or visiting merchants, and of members of two commercial guilds or "hundreds" which were respectively known as the *sotnia gostinnaia*, or "hundred of *gosti*," and the *sotnia sukonnaia*, or "hundred of clothiers." On the other hand, the main body of the commercial-industrial community of the capital was grouped into a number of *tchernia sotni*, or "black[1] hundreds," and *tchernia slobodi*, or "black wards"; both of which classes of units might be likened to our modern guilds of small tradesmen. To the Council of 1598 21 *gosti*, the wardens of all the superior "hundreds," and 13 wardens of the inferior mercantile associations received summonses. In every case a *gost* seems to have received a personal summons in virtue of his social standing (at all events as many of the *gosti* as were available at the time); but in those days the number of that class was small, and comprised but two or three scores at the most. On the other hand, wardens of "hundreds" received summonses (or mandates

[1] *i.e.* common, or of the people.

from their units) in virtue of their position as office-holders. Those offices, however, they acquired through public election, not through government appointment (as in the case of the *golovi*, or heads of "hundreds," of the nobility). Hence the summonses to mere *wardens* of mercantile "hundreds" of the year 1566 had, by the year 1598, given place to summonses to *office-holding representatives* of those "hundreds."

In the complex composition of the two *Sobori* of which I have been speaking we may distinguish four separate groups of members. In the first of those groups we see representatives of the supreme ecclesiastical administration, in the second, of the supreme administration of the State, in the third, of the military-official class, and, in the fourth, of the trading-industrial community. The same distinction of groups—at all events as regards the Council of 1566—is made by a contemporary chronicler, who writes that, at that Council, the Tsar "did speak with bishops and priests and all the Holy Synod, and with boyars and heads of *prikazi*, and with princes and sons of boyars and servitors of the State, and with *gosti* and merchants and all men of trade." The first two groups were administrative bodies, and the second two were members of two social classes: and it is only to the latter of these groups that we can attribute any *representative* status. Yet the persons whom I have thus termed representative members of two social classes were not representative in *our own* sense of the term (*i.e.* deputies elected with special powers to represent their respective classes in a *Zemski Sobor*), but office-holding or official persons who had been appointed heads of their local communities (whether through nomination or election) for the purpose of executing military-administrative or financial commissions imposed upon them by the Government. Hence the basis of representation on a *Zemski Sobor* was not public election or public mandate, but a government summons issued in virtue of office or avocation. I have said that the exception noticed in the Council of 1598 did not affect this basis; and if the composition of the Council of 1550 was, even approximately, the same as the composition of the Council of 1598, the general physiognomy of the *Zemskïe Sobori* of the sixteenth century becomes clear. At those gatherings the Government was brought into touch with the community in general, and took into its confidence the members of two social classes in particular—namely, the metropolitan nobility and the leading metro-

politan merchants. Yet the councillors whom it drew from these classes did not figure at *Zemskie Sobori* as representative either of the community or of the country, but as mere *doers of State service*, as public administrative instruments of the central Government. In other words, on such occasions the two classes in question only held the status of representatives of the country in virtue of their official position, not in virtue of any powers voluntarily committed to them by the country. They were the leaders of the local communities, selected by the Government to assemble in the capital as supplementary instruments for the management of those communities. Hence the *Zemski Sobor* of the sixteenth century was an institution *which enabled the Government to take the advice of its agents*. Such was the primitive type of local government in Russia. In those days, representation was only understood in the sense of a gathering of the wielders of authority, of the organs of administration, in a State, not in the sense of a convention of persons empowered by *the community* or by *the people*. Yet sixteenth-century ideas regarded such a convention as none the less a representative popular assembly—an assembly which had authority to decide the fate of the nation. This view of popular representation owed its existence to the fact that, at that period, a nation was looked upon in a sense altogether different from that of to-day. At the present day popular representation is regarded as an expression of the will of a people, through the medium of representatives chosen by the people itself; while a nation (taken as a political whole) is looked upon as a State, and a Government both as the organisation which binds that nation into a political whole and as an entity created by the nation in question. On the other hand, the idea in Moscow of the sixteenth century was that a nation had no right to appoint exponents of its will, since there already existed aboriginal and suitable authorities for the purpose—namely, authorities appointed of God in the shape of the Government and its agents. *These* constituted the real State, and a nation ought to have no will of its own, but to wish as the authorities which represented it wished. Though the Council which elected Boris Godunov to the Tsarship comprised among its members only 13 *sotskie* of metropolitan "black hundreds," as the contingent furnished by the non-privileged classes, certain documents relating to that election speak of the affair as participated in by "a multitude of all the people," by "all Orthodox

Christians," by "all the towns of the Russian State," and even by "people of Christendom without number for multitude, and come from all the ends of the States in the Russian Empire." Yet it is not merely the departmental-clerical bombast which was the besetting weakness of the old-time chancellories of the capital that we hear in these phrases: rather they were the expression of a theory that present *in spirit* at that Council was the mass of the nation at large, where it spoke through the mouths of its non-elective, yet natural, representatives assembled in the metropolis. In the social consciousness of the Russian denizen of that day the juridical sense occupied a far larger place than it does now. The fiction of representation of the masses by the metropolitan classes was partly the work of the Russian Church jurists, even as the *Zemski Sobor* itself was partly framed on the analogy of the *Osviestchenni Sobor* or Holy Synod — whence, indeed, the title of *Sobor*. The Russian ecclesiastical community of those days largely held the idea that the Hierarchy alone constituted the Church militant: wherefore the Holy Synod was exclusively an assembly of pastors and preceptors of the Church. In the same manner, the *Zemski Sobor* of the sixteenth century was exclusively an assembly of directors of the various departments of the State's administration, even though the activity of those departments was external to the *Sobor*—each in the circle of its peculiar functions. In short, men saw in the *Zemski Sobor* of the period an institution representative of the State's organisation, while upon the living, the concrete, matter which lived and worked within the framework of that organisation (namely, the community or the people administered) they looked less as a political force able to speak in the Council through the mouths of its plenipotentiaries, or as a *civil* body, than as a pastorate for whose welfare only its superiors could take thought. That is to say, a *Zemski Sobor* constituted the exponent of the pastorate's *interests*, but not of its *will;* the members of the *Sobor* represented the community only in so far as they *administered* it. For this view of popular representation to be shattered, and for future *Zemskie Sobori* to become endowed with a real, not a fictitious, representative composition, it was necessary for the State to undergo the terrible upheaval which it experienced at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

This composition of the *Zemskie Sobori* allows of no question as to the system of representation on such bodies, nor as to whether such

representation was of corporations, or of ranks, or of anything else; since, if the *Sobor* represented anything at all, it represented only the capital. At the same time, in the capital there were centred all the most influential and predominant elements in the country: wherefore it might be said that the *Sobor* represented the country through the capital, and represented the capital in so far as it (the *Sobor*) represented the country. Also, the composition of these Councils is a guide to the status of the representatives who were present at them. That is to say, it shows us that a representative attended them only in virtue either of his official post, or of his calling as a State servitor, or of his social position. Whether the Government *summoned* him to the Council on the strength of such qualification, or whether the local community whereof he was the head *sent* him thither, is a point of no essential importance, since, as soon as a man rose to be the head of his local community (whether through government appointment or through election), he, in virtue of that position, became also the recognised, natural, inevitable representative of that community on all occasions when it needed to be represented. Yet these two sources of representative powers (namely, popular election, and a summons from the Government in virtue of an office) were not *opposed* to one another, as hostile principles, but, on the contrary, conjoined as mutually supplementary agencies. For instance, when the Government was in doubt whom to appoint to a given post, it demanded election; while, *vice versa*, when the community had no one to elect, it petitioned for appointment. The important point was, not the source of a councillor's powers, but the provision of a satisfactory executor of the Council's will. The Council needed, not a local petitioner empowered to treat with the central authority on behalf of the wishes and requirements of his electors, but an administrative or social agent capable of returning answers to the questions of that authority, and of furnishing advice on any matter which the authority might put to him. Consequently to these Councils were summoned from the community, not men enjoying the confidence of their local worlds or social classes in virtue of any personal qualities or relations, but men who stood at the head of those local worlds or social classes in virtue of their position as persons at once acquainted with the affairs and opinions of the circles wherein they moved and capable of executing any decree adopted by a given Council. Such was the position of the

nobility and superior merchants of the capital in their *local* spheres of office. Lastly, after they had given their opinion in the Council, or issued a decree with the assent of the central Government, it was the duty of the chosen members of the two classes named (as the Council's executive organs) to carry out that opinion or that decree in the localities officially assigned to them, for the purpose, by the Government.

Such was the type of representative evolved by the practice of the *Sobori* of the sixteenth century. As yet, the petitioner-representative "on behalf of all the needs of his brethren," of the species to be met with in the *Sobori* of the seventeenth century, had not made his appearance. In brief, therefore, it may be said that the object of the *Zemskie Sobori* of the period was to unite the sentiments and activities of the supreme Government with those of its subordinate organs, and to furnish the Government with information as to public opinion on the position of affairs, the attitude of the public towards matters pendent before the Council, and the probable efficiency of proposed executors of decrees which the central authority had adopted on the basis of information furnished and opinions expressed. This object is expressed with especial clearness in the *Prigovornaia Gramota*, or Register of Resolutions passed by the *Sobor* of 1566. From this document we gather that the *Sobor* was opened by a speech from the Tsar, in which he propounded, for the consideration of the Council, the questions of whether it were possible to withstand the Polish foe, whether or not peace ought to be made with him, and whether certain towns of Livonia which the Polish king had taken under his protection should be abandoned. The *Prigovornaia Gramota* is couched in the form of a series of written resolutions adopted by the several groups into which the Council was divided. Those groups consisted of (1) monasterial superiors, archbishops, bishops, archimandrites, priests, and monks, to the number of 32 persons (constituting the Holy Synod), (2) boyars, *okolnichi*, and other high lay functionaries and superior clerks, to the number of 30 persons (constituting the *Boyarskaia Duma*), (3) *dvoriané* or gentry of the superior grade, to the number of 97 persons, (4) gentry and "sons of boyars" of the secondary grade, to the number of 99 persons (these last two groups belonged to the metropolitan nobility), (5) three *pomiestchiki* of Toropetz, (6) six *pomiestchiki* of Veliki Lugi (these two groups also belonged to the metropolitan nobility, but were formed into

separate, *local*, bodies of that order), (7) *diaki* of metropolitan *prikazi*, to the number of 33 persons, and (8) *gosti* and other merchants of Moscow and Smolensk, to the number of 75 persons—mostly drawn from the two superior mercantile orders which, at this date (1566), corresponded to the *sotnia gostinnaia* and *sotnia sukonnaia* mentioned in the records of the *Sobor* of 1598. One member of the Council—a printer named Viskovati—was unable to agree with his fellow members, and "spoke his thought" separately, while the mercantile contingent from Smolensk, though sharing the opinions of their fellow commercials of the capital, ventured to introduce a supplementary resolution of their own. Likewise the members of the Council seem to have been grouped in great variety—by departments, by ranks, by social classes, and even by localities. Also we note that they were invariably well-informed on the question which they were called upon to discuss, and that the superior groups of them in particular (including even the clergy) entered into international, political, geographical, and strategical details which show that the Government had communicated to them an ample store of preliminary *data* for a full consideration of the question at issue. In addition, the members of each group debated the question *separately*—"they spoke among themselves of the Lithuanian matter." Yet, both in the resolutions passed and in the motives which underlay those decisions, as well as in certain individual expressions which are used, we see so much agreement that the thought arises whether consideration of the question by *groups* may not have been preceded by some *general* conference in which the more weighty opinions put forward by all the groups, or a majority of them, underwent a previous process of elaboration. Yet, even so, the resolutions of the groups retain their professional individuality, since each group looked at the question from its own point of view—from the point of view which would naturally occur to it in consequence of its social position. The resolution of the clergy is very decided in its tone. It reviews the matter pre-eminently from the religious standpoint, and not without a certain amount of dialectic. Great (says the resolution) is the conciliatoriness of the Tsar. In everything he is forbearing. He abandons a town here and a town there to the enemy; Polish prisoners he surrenders without ransom, though ransoming his own; he puts the Polish king to shame. Yet he must yield no more. To hand over any towns of Livonia to the

Polish king would mean the destruction of the churches which the Tsar had built in Livonia, the placing of Pskov in a very difficult position, and the extinction of trade in those regions. Above all things the Polish king is at fault in that he has taken under his protection towns already won for him by the arms of Muscovy (that is to say, the Germans of Livonia had yielded to the Polish king only after being weakened by Muscovite attacks). Otherwise the king would never have captured a single town. "Yet hath the Livonian land descended unto us from our forefathers—from the great lord Yaroslav Vladimirovitch—and is the heritage of our Tsar." In short, the clergy adopted a *warlike* resolution—not to conclude peace, but to retain the Livonian towns. "Yet whether the Tsar do stand for them lieth in his will as God may bid him do. Our duty unto our lord is to pray unto God, since it is not befitting that we should counsel the Tsar in such a matter." On the other hand, the boyars and other functionaries of the *Boyarskaia Duma* adopted the *political* and *diplomatic* view. They foresaw the risk of concluding a peace which might enable the Polish king to recruit his forces and strengthen his position in Livonia. Consequently, said they, it were better to continue the war, especially in view of Poland's external difficulties, and of the fact that "all of us be ready to yield our lives for the Tsar." At the same time, "let everything be according unto the will of God and of the Tsar. And as it hath been revealed unto us, so will we declare our thoughts unto our *Hosudar*."[1] For their part, the *dvoriané* or gentry of the different groups made their resolutions conform to those of their superiors, the clergy and the *dumnïe liudi*. Indeed, they seem to have been almost confused at being asked their opinion about so important a matter of policy. It was for the Tsar, they declared, to manage his affairs of State, and for them, his slaves and mere serving men, to mount their horses, and on those horses to die for the Tsar if he should bid them do so. Yea, they were ready to do his bidding, and to lay down their lives even for a *dessiatina* of land which might be conquered by the foreign foe. One consideration, above all others, convinced them of the justice of the Tsar's cause—namely, that, so long as he had not conquered the Livonian country, the Polish king had had no pretext for intervening on its behalf: whereas that king was now intervening. The resolution also of the *diaki*, or heads of *prikazi*, was exceedingly

[1] Tsar or Emperor.

warlike. The Tsar had taken Polotsk and other Livonian towns with the sword, while other towns had grown so weak under Russian attacks that the Polish king had been able to gain a footing in them. How, then, could the Tsar draw back? Nevertheless, since they had no heads for military matters, the *diaki* hastened to conclude their resolution thus: "But we slaves do hold in readiness our lives for whatsoever affairs of State shall be thought meet unto us." As for the *gosti* and other merchants, they looked upon the matter solely from the *economic* standpoint. The Tsar and his people had "apportioned of their chattels" (*i.e.* spent all their means) upon the acquisition of certain Livonian towns. How, then, could the Tsar retreat? "We who be not of the service of the State" (concludes the resolution) "do know not of that service; yet we do set no store upon our goods, and are ready to yield even our lives for the Tsar, to the end that his hand may everywhere be exalted." Furthermore, it is important to notice a certain difference in the terms in which the resolutions of the various groups, as recorded in the Register, are couched: the difference being that, while the clergy offer the Tsar their *advice*, the rest of the Council only express their *opinions*. Clearly, in the eyes of the members of the assembly, this represented the comparative valuation of ecclesiastical and lay counsel. Encouraged by this unanimously expressed desire on the part of the *Sobor* to serve the State's interests, the Tsar proceeded to propound exorbitant demands to the Polish king; and on those demands being, one and all, rejected by the Polish Government, the war continued. Nevertheless, in 1570, without convening a new Council, Ivan concluded a treaty with Poland on the basis of the *statu quo*, despite the fact that the boyars insisted upon the execution of the resolutions passed by the previous *Zemski Sobor*.

Such was the course of the affair in the Council. The most essential stage in the *Prigovornaia Gramota* is reached when we come to the general resolution with which it ends. In that resolution the clergy declare that "unto this rescript and unto our words have we set our hands," while the other members of the Council state that "on this rescript and on our words have we kissed the cross unto the Tsar." For a member to "kiss the cross on his words" meant the taking of a solemn oath to execute a given decree passed by the Council, while the "setting of hands to words" by the clergy had a like

significance (being the actual swearing of oaths forbidden to spiritual persons). Both forms of affirmation of a decree by a *Zemski Sobor* afford evidence that such decrees had not only a moral, but also a *juridical*, significance—that they were not solely the outcome of debate, but a formal engagement which was common to all and jointly framed; an engagement which bound all the members of the Council into a whole, into a species of corporation—at all events in so far as the execution of the decree in hand was concerned. Finally, we find the members unanimously binding themselves to serve their Tsar truly, to cleave unto him and his children "and their territories," and to withstand his foes,—"yea, such of us as be found meet, even with our lives, according unto this same kissing of the cross."

The mention of this solemn undertaking brings us face to face with the question of the *origin* and *significance* of the *Zemski Sobor* of the sixteenth century. Though not a representative gathering in our own sense of the word, the *Sobor* at least had a right to consider itself *territorial*. Its composition included two elements easily distinguishable—namely, the dispositive and the executive. The former was expressed in the higher departments of the central administration, and the latter in individual members of the class of metropolitan *dvoriané*, as well as of the class of superior metropolitan merchants. The local communities, official and agrarian, were accorded no direct representation at the Council of 1566—they were represented neither by special plenipotentiaries nor by elective authorities of their own choosing: yet between those local communities and the *Sobor* the two metropolitan classes which I have named helped to maintain at least a connection, both social and administrative. Local administrators owed their creation to popular election, and the nobility and superior merchants of the capital to recruitment from the ranks of local administrators; both of the two categories being chips cut from the local communities, to make good any vacancies in the service *personnel* of the centre. Yet, in becoming instruments of the central administration, these recruits did not sunder the tie between themselves and their local worlds, but continued to carry on their private pursuits there, since the only new provincial cares and relations which the capital imposed upon them arose from their being periodically dispatched to the cantons on responsible commissions of State. The same responsibility, confirmed by a "kissing of the cross" before the

Council, caused the central Government closely to approximate to the local administrations in respect of common possession of one fundamental principle—namely, the principle of responsibility towards the State, the principle which Ivan IV. introduced into local administration for the purpose of abolishing the old civil responsibility to which *kormlentshiki* had been subject when complaints were lodged against them by persons who had suffered wrong at their hands. Nevertheless the manner of the imposition of this responsibility was different in the case of the central Government from the manner of its imposition in the local administrations. In the latter the local community stood sponsor towards the Government on behalf of its (the local community's) elected administrators, while, in the former, the agents of the Government themselves furnished a corporate guarantee that they would fulfil any decree of the Council in the local communities to which they might be posted by the Government. Yet, even with this difference, the Government's aim was, in both cases, the same—namely, to secure for itself responsible executors of its will: and this union of authority with service through the taking of a solemn oath in the Council constituted the supreme form of assumption of State responsibility—constituted a corporate guarantee, as the form which, most of all, lay at the basis of Muscovite local self-administration.

Thus the *Zemski Sobor* of the sixteenth century was not popular representation, but an extension of the central Government. Such extension was rendered possible by the fact that, on more than ordinarily important occasions, there was introduced into the composition of the *Boyarskaia Duma* (*i.e.* of the Council of State) an element which, though social, not governmental, in its origin, owed its creation to governmental appointment. That element consisted of such leading men of the local communities, service and industrial, as the Government summoned to the capital for deliberative purposes. These heads of local communities did not constitute a special ring or *clique* which stood or acted in the *Duma* apart from the central Government, but a body which actually entered into the composition of the latter, and formed groups parallel to those administrative groups whose voices carried equal weight with that of the Holy Synod (I refer, of course, to the metropolitan nobillty and heads of *prikazi*) on occasions when delivery of opinions was called for. Consequently the

Zemski Sobor of the sixteenth century was really the *Boyarskaia Duma* (*i.e.* the Government), aided by certain members of the upper classes of the country and the community. This periodical supplementing of the staff of the Government was a political necessity of the age. During the period of his boyar guardianship Ivan IV. became painfully conscious of the shortcomings of the system of administrative *kormlenia*—a system wherein he so clearly discerned the source of all the external and internal misfortunes of the nation that already he had visions of the downfall of the Empire. Consequently he began to think, not of abolishing the highly placed *kormlentshiki* in favour of a new administrative class, but of placing the system of administration on a new basis, and strengthening the Government with forces drawn from *below*—*i.e.* from the community administered. In 1550 he said to Alexis Adashev, in appointing him head of the new Office of Petitions to the Throne: "I have taken thee from among the small men, through hearing of thy good works, and do set thee beside me: and not only thee, but others like unto thee, such as may lighten my cares and watch over the people committed to me of God. Report thou unto us the truth, and choose for us just judges from among the boyars and our great men." Again, in his message to the Council of the *Stoglav* he prays the clergy and "my well-beloved princes and great men, my men of war and all Orthodox Christendom, that with one mind ye do give me your aid and comfort." How this invocation bore fruit in Ivan's reforms of local administration we have seen: all business which was entrusted to the jurisdiction of the new local institutions being committed to the care of administrative agents drawn from the local communities themselves, according to election, and under a dual responsibility—namely, a personal responsibility of the officials elected, and a joint responsibility of the electors themselves. At the centre, however, matters arranged themselves differently. There, for the assistance of the boyar and departmental administrations, two categories of executive officials were recruited from among the local administrations—namely, a military-administrative category and a fiscal-financial category. Making the capital their centre, these executive officials served as local agents in the provinces, with the aid of locally elected officials. On behalf of the metropolitan nobles they acted as cantonal assessors of the gentry class, and on behalf of members of the upper mercantile community of the capital they acted as local

tsielovalniki. Also, for these metropolitan agents of the Government, governmental appointment took the place of election, while both upon the one and the other category (namely, upon the government agents dispatched from the centre and upon the locally elected officials) there was imposed a personal responsibility for the due execution of their functions. In questions of more than ordinary importance—*i.e.* questions which called for special co-operative efforts on the part of all the available forces of the Government—the latter invited its most trusted metropolitan agents to join it in council, in order that it might take stock of them, with a view to their utility in the future. On such occasions the supreme power regarded the taking of a solemn oath before the *Zemski Sobor* as the special election of a popular deputy to the assembly, since the oath constituted the taker of it a responsible executor who was guaranteed to carry out any decree of the Council's, and who could exercise responsible powers on the spot, and there figure as a representative of the Sovereign's will—as an official who had authority to unite in one the divergent activities of the various corporate social circles and petty local institutions. In this respect, indeed, our *Zemski Sobor* differed, in its origin, from the conventions of Western Europe with which it is usually compared. The Western conventions of the Middle Ages owed their origin to the need for establishing amicable relations between one corporate body that was struggling for its freedom and another, as well as between those corporate bodies and their respective Governments; whereas the Russian *Sobor* arose from the necessity of the Russian Government being able to reckon upon every available social resource for carrying out the work of administration and securing to the State the due fulfilment of a decree when adopted. Thus the Russian *Zemski Sobor* was born, not of political strife (as in the case of popular representation in the West), but of administrative exigency. The *Zemski Sobor* arose both contemporarily with, and in connection with, the local reforms of Ivan IV., and constituted a joint conference of the *Boyarskaia Duma* (*i.e.* the central Government) with the two metropolitan classes which served that Government as its most trusted, responsible organs. Such conferences were organised both for the elaboration of general decrees on all the more important questions of State life and for the adoption, by the members of the *Sobor*, of joint, responsible guarantees for the execution of any enactments made by such an assembly.

It might be thought that, in taking this view of the origin of the *Zemski Sobor*, I have attempted to belittle the significance of that institution. As a rule, we are apt to approach its study with excessive expectations, and to cry out in astonishment at the fact of Moscow of the sixteenth century appearing to have possessed a representative parliament. Yet for such a parliament to have been possible we should have to presume such a series of political and juridical ideas concerning the nation and the State, authority and freedom, personal rights and political, public interests and private, political representation and private commission,—it would be necessary, I say, to presume the presence, in the Muscovite minds of that age, of such a number of complicated conceptions in every department of sixteenth-century Russian life (not to speak also of having to presume the existence of a highly complicated combination of conditions) as are *never at any time* possible save where social development has attained to a high level. How, indeed, could such conditions exist, or such ideas be formed on soil of the Upper Volga which, as yet, had been so sparsely fertilised by nature or history? In studying the *Zemskie Sobori* of the sixteenth century we meet with no such conditions or ideas, but only see that the *Sobor* was not a permanent institution, that it possessed neither a binding governing authority nor a legally defined jurisdiction, that it was powerless to secure the rights and interests either of the nation as a whole or of its individual classes, and that the elective element in it was either wholly absent or negligible. What sort of a representative parliament was it (we might say) in which the representatives of the people were exclusively official persons in the service of the State? The *Zemski Sobor* of the sixteenth century cannot possibly have been in a position to satisfy the abstract demands of corporate or popular representation! Well, regarded from such a dogmatic point of view, the objection would be just, and to it we might even add the question: What sort of a representative parliament was it in which there were no real representatives at all? Yet, over and above dogmatics of right, and over and above the general forms and principles of a State order, there remain *politics—i.e.* an accumulation of practical means for the attainment of given ends of State. These constitute a sphere wherein such forms of participation by a community in its own government may arise as cannot well be assigned to any of the usual categories of popular representation.

From that aspect it is that we may discern the political meaning, the historical justification, of the Russian *Sobor* of the sixteenth century. An order of government which had been evoked by the needs of the community long remained the permanent, the established, order after those needs had passed away, while the social class which had both directed and benefited by that obsolete order of government still remained imposed upon the country as an unnecessary burden—as a burden whose social sway had become an abuse. From the middle of the fifteenth century onwards the Muscovite Tsars continued to rule united Great Rus through a system of *kormlenia* which, bequeathed to them from the appanage period, was, on the formation of the Muscovite *prikazi*, adopted also by the ever-increasing swarm of officials of those departments; until by the middle of the sixteenth century the two orders of institutions had become incorporated into a compact edifice of *prikazi* which provided a living for a heterogeneous mob of boyars, *dvoriané*, slaves, clerks, secretaries, and still more, those "sons of priests and of the common people" to whom Prince Kurbski refers.[1] As a counterpoise to this administration through *prikazi* (an administration wherein the system of *kormlenia* furnished no answer to problems of State) we see the elective principle introduced into the administration of the provinces, and the principle of governmental appointment into that of the centre. These two resources gave rise to a steady permeation of the administrative *personnel* with social forces upon which it was found possible to impose an obligation of honorary, though responsible, administrative and judicial service. In the community of the period of Ivan IV. there gradually arose an idea that the *Zemski Sobor* should take the lead in this matter of the regulation and reform of administration through *prikazi;* and in a preface to what is known as the *Besieda* or "Discourse of the Sorcerers of Valaam" (a pamphlet against monasterial landowning) an anonymous publicist invites the spiritual authorities to consecrate the Muscovite Tsars to the good work, so that those Tsars may convene "universal councils" of all towns and cantons and of men of every rank, and may hold such councils "every year," and, during the time of their session, daily put to them such prudent questions concerning the affairs of the people as may enable them (the Tsars) to restrain their *voievodi* and *prikaznïe liudi* from

[1] See p. 107.

extortion, dilatoriness, and other irregularities ("abuses of authority without number"), and so preserve their realms in prosperity. As a matter of fact, the *Zemski Sobor* of the sixteenth century never became either a universal or a permanent or an annual assembly, nor did it ever assume supervision over the administration. On the other hand, its disappearance was not unattended with certain results upon the legislation, government, and political consciousness of the Russian community. For instance, (as already seen) both the revision of the First *Sudebnik* and the main scheme of Ivan IV.'s local reforms were carried out partially with the assistance of the first *Sobor*, and, on Ivan's death, the Council even filled up a gap in the fundamental laws by revising the hitherto customary order of succession to the throne. That is to say, the *Sobor* acquired *dispositive* powers. Also we have seen that the supreme power in the Muscovite Empire descended under the old *proprietary* system of the appanage period —*i.e.* through bequeathal, and that by his will of 1572 Ivan IV. appointed his eldest son, Ivan, his successor. In 1581 the death of that heir at the hands of his father annulled this testamentary disposition, and the Tsar never executed another will. Consequently his second son, Feodor—now, of course, become the eldest—found himself without any juridical title, any State instrument, to give him the right to ascend the throne. Eventually the desiderated instrument was evolved by the *Zemski Sobor*. One Russian item states that, on the death of Ivan IV., there came to Moscow, from "all the towns," certain "notable men" of the Empire, who besought the Tsarevitch "to be Tsar," while an Englishman[1] then resident in Moscow considered this same gathering of "notable men" to have been a sort of parliament composed only of the higher clergy and of "all the nobility whatsoever": which expressions would seem to imply that the *Sobor* of 1584 was, in its composition, similar to the *Sobor* of 1566, which had consisted solely of the Government and of members of the two leading classes of the capital. However that may be, the *Sobor* of 1584 caused the personal will of the *otchinnik*, of the testator, to become replaced by a State act of election of a Tsar, despite the circumstance that the act in question was covered with the customary form of a pan-territorial petition to the throne. In other words, the appanage

[1] Sir Jerome Horsey, English Ambassador to Moscow during the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

system of succession to the throne was not absolutely abolished, but was confirmed by a juridical title so novel as to cause the system to lose its appanage character. A similar dispositive importance belonged to the *Sobor* of 1598, in so far as the election of Boris Godunov to the Tsarship was concerned. Naturally, convenings of the Council at such rare and momentous junctures during the sixteenth century were bound to produce a great impression upon the mind of the people. Only on those occasions was the Government of boyars and *prikaznïe liudi* seen standing side by side with members of the community, as political equals who had equal authority to express their thoughts to the Tsar; only on those occasions did the Government cease to think of itself as the sole ruling caste; only on those occasions did the *dvoriané*, *gosti*, and inferior merchants, assembled in the capital from Novgorod, Smolensk, Yaroslavl, and many another town, feel conscious of being bound in a common obligation "to wish well unto the Tsar and his territories"; only then did they have an inkling of their existence as a homogeneous nation, in the political sense of the word; only then did they know themselves, the people of Great Rus, to be a self-contained, integral State.

Lastly, a leading *motif* in the provincial reforms of Ivan IV. was the idea of admitting the community to a share in its own administration. This communicated to the *Zemski Sobor* a certain political impetus, a certain historical growth. On each successive occasion of the Council's assembling its composition became more complex, as well as more comprehensive of the community: which constitutes a sign that the idea of general representation was continually growing clearer. Thus to the *Sobor* of 1566 were summoned only nobility of the capital and metropolitan merchants of the higher grades, in virtue of their official standing or official avocation. They were *fictitious* representatives of the community, and seem to have contained no *elected* plenipotentiaries among their number, while an observer of Muscovite events during the Period of Troubles (namely, the German, Bussov) says that Boris Godunov was elected solely by State officials who happened to be present at the time in Moscow. Yet from an Act of 1598 we see that the *Zemski Sobor* of that year had at least lost something of the old purely metropolitan and aristocratic composition of such assemblies, seeing that its ecclesiastical section, the Holy Synod, though hitherto a purely monastic body, included

eleven Muscovite *protopopi* or archpriests, and that at that Council there were present also elected delegates of the provincial *dvoriané* —the first corporate class to acquire direct representation on a *Sobor*. Moreover, the Muscovite *sotni* or guilds of inferior merchants of the capital (which had now attained incorporation) received summonses to the Council, not through their wardens alone, as in the case of the Council of 1566, but through the persons of their *elective* heads or *starosti*. Representation must have indeed been penetrating to the inmost depths of the community when even the industrial masses of the metropolis, the "black hundreds," received a call to the *Sobor* through the persons of their elective *sotskïe*. True, at this Council the capital still retained its old overwhelming predominance, and no delegates of the commercial-industrial population of the provincial towns at all seem to have been present: yet the idea of a universal council was at least glimmering in men's minds. Margeret tells us that, previous to the election of Boris Godunov, he (Boris) demanded, or feigned to demand, that some eight or ten State agents should be summoned from every town, in order to ensure that "all the people" should arrive at a unanimous decision on the question of who should be elevated to the throne. To the idea of a general council the cessation of the dynasty must have given further impetus, since an elected Tsar could not well look upon the State as his *otchina* in the same way that an *hereditary* successor would have done, while his authority, by ceasing to be proper to himself individually, was bound to acquire the character of a function imposed upon him by the will of his fellows, as expressed in the agreement made with him by the Council. Thus there arose a new conception of the nation as less a pastorate subject to the fostering care of a Government than the dispenser of the State's will, and the transmitter of that will, through a popular council, to a Tsar elected by itself. With the growth of this idea went an extension of elective representation on the Council: the first signs of which are to be met with on the cessation of the old dynasty—*i.e.* on the holding of the Council of 1598 for the election of a new occupant of the throne. The unrest which then began, and spread ever wider and wider among the community, was bound to give an added instigation to this idea. True, the first pretender [1] masqueraded as an *hereditary* Tsar: yet when, for the

[1] The first false Dmitri.

trial of the Princes Shuiski (accused of impugning that title), he convened a general Council, not a single member of that body was in favour of the accused, but "all did cry out upon them." At this Council Margeret states there to have been present "personnes choisies des tous estats." Although, later (*i.e.* in the seventeenth century), the *Zemski Sobor* developed into a genuinely representative institution, the fatal conditions of Russian life with which these gatherings were designed to contend gradually obscured their activity, and for a long while submerged the idea which had so strenuously striven to fortify itself in them. That idea was the notion of establishing a permanent, a legally regulated, percolation of healthy social forces into the composition of the ruling class—a class which, in Russia, has constantly had a tendency to form itself into a caste close-locked from the people, into a parasitic growth gradually enveloping the whole of the national frame.

We have now studied the origin and progress of the reorganisation of the Muscovite Empire, and have seen that the political cleavage between the Sovereign and his boyars had no apparent effect upon that reorganisation. The reforms of Ivan IV. which wrought so great a change in provincial administration were directed, not against the boyars, but against the *kormlentshiki;* they strove, not with political claims, but with official abuses and administrative irresponsibility. On the other hand, had this reorganisation of the Empire no effect upon the political cleavage between the Sovereign and the boyars? Do we not see therein an explanation of the form which the quarrel between the two parties assumed? Although the Tsar conceived schemes of carrying out a wholesale extermination of the boyar class (which constituted his right hand in the administration), he never removed that class from participation in the working of the State, for the reason that it represented a body with which he could not afford to dispense. Meanwhile the class in question suffered and petitioned, though its pusillanimous ideas never seem to have strayed beyond schemes of flight to Lithuania; while, for his part, the Tsar grew ever more callous in his shedding of non-boyar blood, and his flock of *oprichniki* —a mob of legalised, uniformed anarchists who offended the moral sense of the Christian section of the community, and caused it also to suffer and to petition—kept settling in ever-increasing numbers over the

land. In the words of a contemporary writer,[1] "anger and lamentation of all the world did arise against the Tsar." That is to say, men murmured and agitated among themselves. Yet of open protest never a spark appeared. Only the Metropolitan ventured to protest on behalf of his pastorate, and he was soon silenced by force.[2] It was as though one party in the feud had lost all feeling of fear and sense of responsibility for the over-exercise of its powers, while the other party—the million-headed people—forgot the measure of its pain and suffering as it grew chill and stiff with terror in the presence of the band of 6000 freebooters who had their eyrie in the fastnesses of Alexandrov. Yet over the community, and over the petty concerns and calculations of the two contending social forces, there seems always to have hovered some supreme interest—an interest which permitted no final rupture to take place, and which periodically compelled those forces, willy-nilly, to act in harmony. That supreme interest was the defence of the Empire against external foes. The Muscovite State arose in the fourteenth century, under the pressure of a foreign yoke, and its organisation and extension were effected in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, amid a continuous struggle for national existence in west, south, and south-east. That external struggle curbed internal hostility, and caused the internal, domestic rivals to make their peace with one another in view of the common foe from without—to sink their political and social differences in the face of national and religious perils.

Thus was the Muscovite Empire compounded. That compounding was a slow and difficult process. Indeed, at the present day we can scarcely understand, still less feel, what sacrifices it must have cost the popular prosperity, and how hardly it pressed upon private life. Yet we can remark in it three principal peculiarities. The first of those peculiarities was the warlike organisation of the State. The Muscovite Empire was Great Rus in arms—Great Rus struggling on one of her frontiers (the western) for national unity, and on another one (the south-eastern) for Christian civilisation, and in both cases for her very existence. The second of those peculiarities was the taxatory, ill-regulated character of the internal administration and social composition of Moscow, with its sharply differentiated corporate

[1] See p. 89.

[2] A reference to the murder by Ivan, with his own hand, of the Metropolitan Philip.

classes. That administration was carried on by a body of covenanted officials, headed by the *sluzhilie liudi*, or State servitors, and supplemented by responsible representatives who were elected by the local communities. Again, the social classes were distinguished from one another, not by rights, but by obligations imposed upon them by the State. Each class was under an obligation either to *defend* the State or to *work for* it (*i.e.* to support those who defended it). Commanders, soldiers, and workers there were, but there were no *citizens*. That is to say, the citizen became a soldier or a worker for the purpose either of defending his country (under the direction of a superior) or of working for it. True, a corporate body existed which, in virtue of its calling, might have brought education to soldiers and workers alike, and at the Council of the *Stoglav* the Tsar called upon that body to undertake the inauguration of public instruction. Yet whether, after the holding of the Council, even a single parish school arose as the result of that charge we have no knowledge. The third peculiarity in the Muscovite order of State was the supreme power, with its undefined (*i.e.* unlimited) field of action, and its undecided relation to its own organs, especially to the chief of them, the boyar aristocracy. The course of affairs clearly indicated to the old dynasty that it should adopt a democratic form of activity, and maintain direct relations with the people: yet none the less it proceeded to organise the State jointly with the boyars, and to let itself grow used to acting with the help of the *élite* of the *Rodoslovetz*.[1] In short, Ivan IV.'s form of activity shows us that, though that activity originally contained signs of democratic sympathies, there eventually became left to it only aristocratic traditions. It could not reconcile those two opposites, and fell in the struggle with the contradiction.

Finally, let us look at the position of the Muscovite Empire among the other States of Europe. Western Europe of that period could furnish no answer to the question at issue, since it barely even remarked the existence of the Empire. Each nation has its own fortunes and its own destiny. The fortunes of a nation are compounded of an accumulation of the external conditions among which it must live and act, while a nation's destiny is expressed both in the use which that nation makes of those conditions and in what it elaborates therefrom for its own life and activity. Fate set the Russian nation

[1] See p. 45.

at the Eastern gate of Europe, to guard it from violation by the nomad brigands of Asia, and for centuries the nation spent its forces in withstanding that pressure of Asiatic hordes. Some of those hosts it beat back (fertilising, in doing so, the broad Steppes of the Don and the Volga with its bones), while others it admitted, through the peaceful portals of the Christian Church, to the European community. Meanwhile Western Europe, relieved of Mahomedan attacks, turned to the New World beyond the ocean,[1] where it found a wide and grateful field for the exercise of its mental and physical energies in the exploitation of untouched riches. Even with its face thus directed to the colonial wealth of the far West and its store of cinnamon and cloves, Europe could still rest assured that behind it, in the direction of the Ural-Altaic East, no danger was to be apprehended. Consequently Western Europe gave little thought to the fact that in that region there was progressing a ceaseless struggle, and that, its principal bases on the Dnieper and the Kliazma abandoned, the defending force had removed its headquarters to the banks of the Moskva, where in the sixteenth century there became formed the centre of a State which at length passed from defence to attack, in order that it might save European culture from the onslaughts of the Tartars. Thus Russia acted at once as the advance guard and the rearguard of European civilisation. Outpost service, however, is everywhere thankless, and soon forgotten, especially when it has been efficiently carried out. The more alert the guard, the sounder the slumbers of the guarded, and the less disposed the sleepers to value the sacrifices which have been made for their repose.

Such was the European position of the Muscovite Empire at the close of the sixteenth century.

[1] The Atlantic.

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